

# MIENNONITE

## Historical Bulletin

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*Clearly Rembrandt:  
The Mennonite  
Preacher Anslo and  
his Wife, "a record of  
shared faith, in keep-  
ing with Mennonite  
values."*

*Credit: Stiftung Preussischer  
Kulturbesitz, Staatliche  
Museen, Gemaldegalerie,  
Berlin, Museum Dahlem.*

## The Master and the Mennonites or "Did Anslo Make it?"

by Julia Kasdorf

In early October 1995, Levi Miller posted this query on Mennolink, the electronic mail list server for Mennonites and their friends: "Did Anslo make it?" At his home in Scottdale, Pennsylvania, Levi was wondering whether any New Yorkers had seen the *Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt* exhibit and whether

they had noticed if the show included the famous masterpiece depicting a Mennonite preacher and his wife. Then in keeping with Mennolink's conversational tone, Levi ventured a few assertions about Rembrandt's theological and personal ties to the Waterlander Mennonites in Amsterdam.

For more than a week, his posting evoked responses—often more enthusiastic than informational—on topics ranging from perceptible evi-

dence of Anabaptist piety in Rembrandt's biblical scenes to speculations about tenuous Mennonite connections shared by artistic notables ranging from Brahms to Ohio organ manufacturers. After all that conjecture, Levi was none the wiser; it seems that no one had actually seen the New York exhibit. But the questions he stirred—about Rembrandt, Mennonites, and why we love to speculate about authenticity—seemed worth considering.



## Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt

On October 10, 1995, the Metropolitan Museum of Art mounted *Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt*, a three-month exhibit exploring the problems of connoisseurship, the art historian's work of identifying the author of a painting. Questions concerning Rembrandt attribution are legion. Only seven of his letters and almost no records of his workshop survive. From early in his career, he attracted many students and imitators, and sometimes it is impossible to determine which paintings are copies and which are collaborative efforts. Moreover, his style, materials, and techniques varied throughout his lifetime, making it difficult to identify signature traits. In 1906, experts ascribed 558 paintings to Rembrandt, 606 in 1909, and 711 in 1921. Now, there are believed to be only about 300 genuine Rembrandts, and the exact number may never be firm, despite official efforts of the Rembrandt Research Project, lavishly financed by the Dutch government since 1969 to authenticate all Rembrandt attributions in the world.

Although the Project employs documentary evidence, state-of-the-art technical analysis, and scholarly connoisseurship, these methods are never entirely conclusive, as the current exhibit demonstrates. While the



*Can we claim him? Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn (1606-1669). Self-portrait at the age of 34, about the time he painted Anso and his wife.*

Research Project has convinced the Metropolitan Museum that 21 of its Rembrandts are not real, the *Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt* show is seen by some as an attempt to demystify the authority of the Dutch group. The exhibit exposes the inexact nature of connoisseurship, revealing disagreements even among the museum staff members who curated the show—Hubert von Sonnenburg, head of the Conservation Department, and Walter Liedtke, curator of Dutch and Flemish paintings, Carolyn

Logan and Nadine Orenstein of the Department of Drawings and Prints, and Stephanie Dickey.

Another expression of the current emphasis on epistemology, the show invites viewers to examine, not just Rembrandt, but the ways in which we know these pictures to be Rembrandts—or not—posing for inspection both the artworks and some of the evidence that connoisseurship considers. Included are all 42 paintings in the museum's collection attributed to Rembrandt—18 are still believed to be authentic—as well as 30 drawings, 32 prints, and several paintings by artists influenced by Rembrandt.

## Mennonite/Not Mennonite

Anso did not make it into the Metropolitan Museum's exhibit. That painting—portraying the wealthy cloth merchant and preacher Cornelis Claesz Anso and his wife, Aeltje Schouten—hangs in Berlin. A few etchings and a drawing of Anso are scattered in collections in Europe and the United States. For Mennonites, these works have been emblems of Rembrandt's ties to Dutch Anabaptism. Prints made from the painting of Anso and his wife began appearing in North American homes and church vestibules in the 1950s, when an association between the master and Mennonites was first popularly celebrated.

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Lacking real evidence, 20th-century scholars cannot claim that Rembrandt (1606-1669) was ever a Mennonite, despite the often-quoted passage from the Italian art critic Filippo Baldinucci, who wrote concerning Rembrandt in 1686:

"The artist professed in those days the religion of the Menists, which, though false too, is yet opposed to that of Calvin, inasmuch as they do not practice the rite of baptism before the age of thirty. They do not elect educated preachers, but employ for such posts men of humble condition as long as they are esteemed by them honourable and just people, and for the rest they live following their caprice."

Baldinucci's source of information was the Danish painter Bernhard Keihl (1624-1687), who worked in Rembrandt's workshop between 1642 and 1644.

This was a critical period in the great artist's career, following the death of his wife, when he painted his masterpiece, *The Night Watch*. It also coincides with his association with Anso (that portrait was commissioned in 1641) and other Mennonite art students and patrons. From those years on, Rembrandt gradually sank into financial ruin, while turning increasingly to biblical subjects that would earn him little income. It is especially in these later paintings that some have recognized a quality suggestive of contact with Mennonite spirituality. However, it is primarily through the preacher Anso that Mennonites have staked their association with Rembrandt.

In 1947 Ira D. Landis published an article in this *Bulletin* about the Anso portrait, suggesting that Rembrandt's parents may have been Mennonites. In keeping with one traditional reading of the painting, Landis elaborately narrates the scene between a Mennonite widow seeking comfort from Anso, her minister. His article ends with an interesting note on the painting's provenance as reported in *Ueber*

***Ay, Rembrandt, paint  
Cornelis' voice!  
The visible part is the  
least of him:  
The invisible is known  
only by hearing;  
he who would see  
Anso must hear him.***

These lines were written by the great Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel, a contemporary of Rembrandt who was also a friend of Anso. The poem was printed below a copy of Rembrandt's etched portrait of Anso.

*Land und Meer* (Oct. 1894), a bound magazine found by Harry F. Staffer of Farmersville, Pa., and translated by Noah G. Good at Lancaster Mennonite School. According to the magazine, the Anso painting was purchased by the Prussian government and exhibited for 90 years before it disappeared from view. In 1815, it turned up in the British

*Our best link to the Dutch master. Rembrandt etched Cornelis Claesz Anso, the "very earnest, pious, upright, and intelligent" Mennonite preacher, and friend of Rembrandt.*



Gallery and hung there until it was spirited off to Germany in the 1890's. Landis concludes with a touching expression of concern about whether Anso would survive the destructions of the war, and notes that at least one reproduction of the painting hangs at Bluffton College in Ohio.

In 1952, Cornelius Krahn reported in *Mennonite Life* the findings of two art historians, Jakob Rosenberg and H. M. Rotermund, working independently on Rembrandt's relations with the Waterlander Mennonites. Rotermund's article, "Rembrandt and the Mennonites," in the same issue asserts that Rembrandt may have had contact with Mennonites in his youth, and certainly affiliated with them after 1641. Both scholars claim that contact with Mennonites affected Rembrandt's religious paintings, and that his later works express beliefs specifically associated with them: humility, introspection, sobriety, and the treatment of such Anabaptist ordinances as the Lord's Supper, adult baptism, and foot washing. Krahn cautions his Mennonite readers to refrain from drawing hasty conclusions, however, arguing instead for an appreciation of the work.

In October 1956, to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Rembrandt's birth, "Anso and his Wife" appeared on the cover of a special edition of *Mennonite Life*, published at Bethel College. The issue featured articles on Rembrandt by Irvin B. Horst, N. van der Zijpp, and John F. Schmidt. Their titles "Rembrandt Knew Mennonites," "Rembrandt van Rijn 1606-1956," and "Some Rembrandts in America" highlight the issue's intent: to establish the connection between Rembrandt and the Dutch Mennonites while educating American readers in an appreciation of the great artist. "We will be well served by articles on Rembrandt and Mennonites if they lead us on to the greater subject of his art," writes Horst at the beginning of his piece which traces



Below Anslo's picture in the Singel Mennonite Church in Amsterdam:

*Whoever looks at Anslo's picture,  
his heart is deeply moved  
by Anslo's fiery zeal evident in his eyes;  
yet could a brush make his voice heard,  
everyone's heart would be converted to virtuous living.*  
—Andr. Spinniker (ME, v. 1, 129)

Rembrandt's connections from boarding with a Mennonite family early in his career (1631-1635) to later friendships with Mennonite art students, poets, and patrons. Rembrandt may have depicted as many as 13 Mennonite men and women throughout his life, and Horst includes a catalogue of suspected Mennonite subjects, including the calligrapher and school-teacher Lieven Willemsz van Coppenol, included in the current exhibit.

Thus questions about Rembrandt's formal religious affiliation seem to have been settled by mid-century, yet study of Mennonite influence in his work continues. In 1992 Austrian-born, Canadian Mennonite art historian Isle Friesen published an updated summary of Rembrandt's Mennonite ties, offering what she calls a "Mennonite interpretation" of communion and community in his works *Simeon and the High Priest* and *Christ at Emmaus*. Her paper appears in a collection of scholarly essays published by Rockway Mennonite Church in Ontario, devoted to the perennial problem of Anabaptist artists and intellectuals: the relation of individual to community. In *From Martyr to Muppy*, in a chapter devoted to "The Mennonite Image in Literature," Piet Visser notes a connection between economic advancement among Dutch Mennonites in the 17th century and their interest in the visual arts and literature. Artistic activities were regarded as

worthy venues for the expression of faith and morality. Visser offers a summary of significant Mennonite contributions to Dutch painting:

The strict old Flemish poet, Karel van Mander, was also a well-known painter in his day, managing an art school in Haarlem. Rombout Uylenburgh, a Waterlander from Amsterdam who worked mostly in Danzig was a brother of Hendrick Uylenburgh, a famous master at a painters' school and art collector. Rembrandt was among his apprentices and married his niece, Saskia, daughter of a Reformed mayor of Leeuwarden in Friesland. Jan de Bakker and Govert Flink, both talented Mennonites, were also trained in his school. The Waterlander preacher of Leeuwarden, Lambert Jacobsz, was well-known as a painter and several other artists were engaged in etching, engraving, and illustrating books. (70)

The most important work on the master and Mennonites is now being done by a non-Mennonite, Stephanie Dickey, who approaches the question without any stake in claiming Rembrandt's connections. In a recent telephone interview, she explained that her interest in Mennonite imagery of the 17th century emerged from study of Rembrandt's portraiture and patronage. She sought to understand how the portraits would have

been viewed by the people for whom they were made, and how objects in the etchings and paintings conveyed information about their subjects. For instance, the Anslo painting shows the man preaching near an open book. Would Mennonites have seen something special in this painting? Yes, Stephanie claimed in her paper, "She Who Has Ears to Hear: Rembrandt's Portrait of the Ideal Mennonite Marriage," delivered at The Quiet in the Land? conference at Millersville University in June 1995. Her interpretation of the painting, etchings, and a poem by Vondel that accompanied the image, suggest that Rembrandt understood and portrayed concepts central to a theological debate that Anslo was engaged in at the time. The painting expresses his beliefs about the "outer word" (as represented by the biblical text and preaching) and the spiritual "inner word" (as depicted by his wife's inspired attention). Rembrandt's choice to include both husband and wife in one portrait created a record of shared faith, in keeping with Mennonite values.

Prior to assuming her teaching position at the Herron School of Art in Indianapolis this fall, Prof. Dickey assisted in the creation of the *Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt* exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum. Although she has identified no Mennonite portraits in the show, she believes that one of the drawings, *Beheading of the Prisoners*, may depict a multiple execution of 16th-century Anabaptist martyrs in Amsterdam. Recently demoted from a Rembrandt attribution to School of Rembrandt, the image is related to a genuine Rembrandt drawing in the British Museum. In the exhibit's catalogue and a forthcoming article, she argues that in the 1640s, Rembrandt's interest in such scenes may have been fueled by his friendship with Anslo, who had close ties with the editor of an Anabaptist martyrology that preceded *Martyr's Mirror*. It may even be that the study anticipated a mar-





Beheading of the Prisoners, once thought to be from Rembrandt's hand, is now considered a product of the School of Rembrandt. Even so, Professor Stephanie Dickey believes this may be a pen-and-ink drawing of an Anabaptist execution scene in Amsterdam.

Credit: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

tyr work planned for a Mennonite audience, although the etching *Beheading of John the Baptist* is the only finished work related to the drawing.

## Did We Make it?

According to a *New York Times* report, there was a point just after the turn of the century when "every painting not nailed down was labeled a Rembrandt, apparently on the theory that if several hundred Rembrandts were a good thing, a few hundred more would be even better." Reading this, I couldn't help but think of the irresistible urge to mark Rembrandt and his subjects with the Mennonite label—although an illegitimate child in 1654 would have excluded him from even the liberal Waterlander fellowship, as it tested his membership in the Dutch Reformed church and resulted in the excommunication of his housekeeper-mistress, Hendrickje Stoffels.

Nevertheless, the impulse to identify Rembrandt with Mennonites—and for Mennonites to identify with him—persists. It is difficult to tell whether there is more to this urge than the celebrity boasts that are typical of minority groups eager to achieve worldly status. The

fact is that Rembrandt did share something meaningful with Anslo and the Waterlander fellowship. According to Prof. Dickey, Mennonites of that time and place were more open to visual artists than their Dutch Reformed, Calvinist contemporaries—and there was no conflict for a Mennonite preacher who was also a painter.

So perhaps the real question is not "Did Anslo make it?" but "Did we make it?" Can American Mennonites, despite traditional scruples about culture and the arts, claim some part in the work of this great master? If only by remote association, are we and Rembrandt somehow kin? Perhaps, but only if we recognize in his work something that reaches the soul, forgetting for that instant the sectarian habits of mind which—like the habits of connoisseurship—seek to authenticate, sorting the Mennonite from not. *D*

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# I Wish I'd Been There

With this issue we begin a new series.

The consulting editors of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* respond to the questions:  
What is the one event in Anabaptist-Mennonite history you wish you could have witnessed—and Why?

## Coup d'etat at Münster

by J. Robert Charles



Jan van Leyden, the revolutionary  
"king of the New Zion"

A coup d'etat through seizure of city hall, expulsion of those who refused (re)baptism, daily arrivals of desperate refugees from across the Netherlands, 18 months of armed resistance to the Catholic bishop and his besieging forces, the "king of the New Zion" Jan van Leyden appointing 12 elders and holding court from a throne erected on the market square, the community of goods, polygamy . . .

My fascination with the ill-fated Anabaptist "New Jerusalem" of 1534-1535 in the Westphalian city of Münster—used ever since by opponents to discredit the whole Anabaptist movement and to justify repressive measures against it,

lamented ever since by Mennonite apologists as the source of "incalculable harm to the cause of the loyal Anabaptism and Mennonitism" (N. van der Zijpp)—originated 25 years ago.

In those heady days of draft resistance, Vietnam War protests, and Art Gish's *The New Left and Christian Radicalism*, any attitude or demeanor with a non-bourgeois, revolutionary cachet, far from horrifying undergraduates such as I, actually commended itself. When it came time to choose a research topic for Walter Klaassen's Left Wing of the Reformation course at Conrad Grebel College—and a classmate had already picked Thomas Müntzer—I was instinctively drawn to Münster.

I remember my odd satisfaction, as a restless twenty-year-old, in learning about some truly quirky and marginal members of my religious family tree, branches my Mennonite elders had seemed overly eager to prune. And I remember my satisfaction as a budding historian in fitting the Münster personalities and developments into the life cycle of revolutions suggested by Crane Brinton in his classic *The Anatomy of Revolution*. Several years later, my wife and I visited Münster and saw still hanging from the tower of St. Lambert's church the cages in which the corpses of Jan van Leyden and two other leaders were displayed following their executions in January 1536.

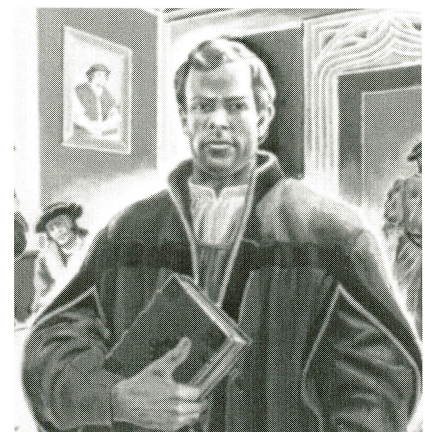
Could I really pass up an opportunity to take in—though not, mind you, necessarily *join* in, now that I'm a respectable, middle-aged family man and scholar—all this and

more eccentric Anabaptist behavior? Not a chance.

—J. Robert Charles teaches history at Goshen College

## Whenever You Drink Coffee in Vienna, Think of Michael Sattler and the Turks

by Joseph S. Miller



Michael Sattler: Unmasking the powers Credit: Painting by Ivan Moon

I wish I could have witnessed the trial of Michael Sattler in 1527 and heard exactly what he said about the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Holy Roman Empire. But I also would



like to be given the chance to talk privately with Michael and ask for his reflections on our 20th-century walls of hostility.

Michael said in his trial: "If the Turks should come, we ought not resist them. For it is written: 'Thou shalt not kill.' I would rather take the field against so-called Christians who persecute, capture, and kill pious Christians than against the Turks . . . the Turk is a true Turk, knows nothing of the Christian faith, and is a Turk after the flesh. But you who make your boast of Christ persecute . . . and are Turks after the spirit" (George Williams, ed., *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, pp. 137 and 141). One of the main charges against Michael Sattler was disloyalty to the state and the church.

It is amazing to me that the "wall" that divided the Holy Roman Empire and the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century was almost exactly at the same place as the "wall" that stood between Western Europe and Eastern Europe after the Second World War. When Michael made his treasonous statement in an Austrian court, the city of Belgrade had already been captured by the Turks in 1521, and Hungary had been captured in 1526. Hungarians, even today, mournfully remember the 1526 date when they were defeated by the Turks at the Battle of Mohacs. The First Siege of Vienna in 1529, which would end in a stalemate, was only two years after Michael's day in court.

I suspect that there are some interesting connections between Sattler's testimony at his trial and modern East-West and Christian-Muslim relationships. How might some of our own modern concerns relate to Sattler's words before the Austrian court of 1527? That court was deeply fearful that the Ottomans would defeat Vienna and then sweep across Western Europe. Michael Sattler's court and society typically responded to their collective anxiety with internal and external violence. The Christian West of

the 16th century, as in our own day, talked at times ad nauseam about a "domino effect," and fallaciously proclaimed to each other that if Vienna fell, all of Europe would fall under Turkish control. If I could take along on my time travel several of Walter Wink's books, I think Michael would know what Wink is talking about. "Yes, that is it!" I can hear Michael Sattler blurt out. "It is indeed all about naming evil and unmasking the powers!"

The big battle for Vienna came in 1683 with all the Christian kingdoms and principalities of the West, except for France, gathered in Vienna (an early NATO?) to defend the Holy Roman Empire. But it is noteworthy, and to me as a Christian, troubling, that Christians always were better off under Ottoman rule than Muslims were under Christian rule. Maybe Michael knew this. The Ottomans were defeated in 1683 and had to abandon their supplies as they fell back east toward their capital of Constantinople. The Turks left much for the West to consider and savor as they retreated. Not the least of which was the coffee the Turks abandoned. Now when we go to Viennese coffee houses, we forget to thank the Turks for their gift of coffee. So the next time I am drinking an espresso in a Viennese coffee house, I shall drink a demitasse and remember the Ottomans; then I shall have a second and remember Michael Sattler.

— Joseph S. Miller is pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church of Lancaster

## Historians' Collaboration on the Mennonite Encyclopedia

by Rachel Waltner Goossen

These days, as many Mennonites in General Conference and Mennonite Church congregations anticipate the eventual integration of the two bodies, we speak often about the historic differences between them with regard to church discipline, polity issues, and the like. While these differences are significant and deserve serious consideration, the integration movement reminds us, happily, that contemporary Mennonites in North America are the beneficiaries of a tradition of collaborative projects throughout the 20th century.

Examples of inter-Mennonite initiatives include the founding in 1920 of Mennonite Central Committee; the establishment of Civilian Public Service during World War II, and the 1958 formation of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. A more recent example on inter-denominational collaboration is the production in 1969 of the *Mennonite Hymnal*, followed in 1992 by *Hymnal: A Worship Book*.

Elizabeth Horsch  
Bender and  
Harold Stauffer  
Bender: Co-laborers  
in producing  
the Mennonite  
Encyclopedia.

Credit: Archives of the  
Mennonite Church, H.  
S. Bender Collection.



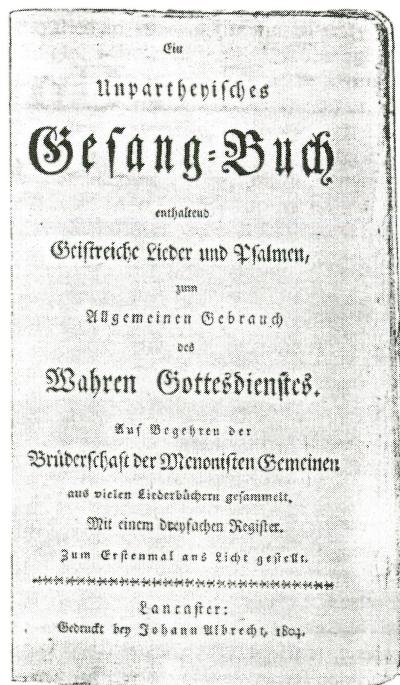


As a Mennonite historian, I wish I could have been part of the scholarly collaboration in the 1940s and 1950s that resulted in publication of the four-volume *Mennonite Encyclopedia*. This was a mammoth effort by scholars of the Mennonite Church, the General Conference, and the Mennonite Brethren. The reference work includes 13,688 articles on topics related to Mennonite life and identity, contributed by more than 2,700 writers in Europe and North America. (In 1990 Mennonite scholars published a fifth volume that supplements the earlier work.) The task of identifying topics and contributors, and the process of interpreting significant theological and historical issues, sometimes vexed the editors. After the death in 1948 of editor C. Henry Smith, co-editors Harold S. Bender and Cornelius Krahn collaborated in ways that drew them into sharp exchanges, but led also to increased collegiality and mutual respect. After years of work, the publication of these four volumes (1945-1959) represented a new cross-fertilization of ideas and, not insignificantly, a sense that Mennonite scholars with different gifts, cultural backgrounds, and institutional loyalties could accomplish much together.

I wish I had been involved with the project for another reason, too: the presence of Elizabeth Horsch Bender, who wrote and edited scores of articles and translated German-language materials. The *Mennonite Encyclopedia* appeared in an era when women's contributions to the historical enterprise were seldom recognized, but Elizabeth Bender's (belated) elevation in status as assistant editor for this project in 1956 is a significant moment in the history of Mennonite women. She died eight years ago, but I think she'd be delighted to learn of the varieties of scholarship now being produced by a younger generation. —Rachel Waltner Goossen teaches history at Goshen College

## Choosing a Hymnal

by Amos B. Hoover



The title page of the 1804 *Unpartheyisches Gesangbuch*, the Lancaster hymnal. Credit: Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.

I wish I could have witnessed the meeting in about 1801 which led to the development of two brand-new American Mennonite hymnals. Two Franconia brethren met with several Lancaster leaders in Martin Mellinger's home east of Lancaster city. Martin Mellinger favored one universal hymnal, but since the Franconia people had already collected more than enough for one hymnal, it was decided that each group would publish its own hymn-book.

I share Mellinger's concern that there should have been only one hymnal. I would have tried to convince the group to go for a larger, common hymnal using thinner paper. A common hymnal would have helped build community between the Franconia and

Lancaster groups. Hymn singing was very common when visitors came from the various settlements as is still done today by the Old Order Mennonites.

Even so, the Lancaster hymnal entitled *Unpartheyisches Gesangbuch* has enjoyed a longer useful life span than any other American Mennonite hymnal—nearly two centuries. It has gone through 40 editions, but is presently out of print.

There is more information available on the early developments of these hymnals than one would suppose. *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, (Vol. 2, p. 879) gave me the first clue of the developments of these first hymnals. I also had the opportunity to study the original sources, including the Martin Mellinger letters still extant in the Peter Weber Collection in Weirhof, Germany. The correspondence of printer Billmeyer of Germantown also sheds light on the early formation. These letters show that the Franconia hymnal, *Die Kleine Geistliche Harfe*, an edition of 4,000 copies, came on the market in September of 1803. One month later, on October 7, 1803, Martin Mellinger pleaded with his own Lancaster Conference that they should be satisfied with the Franconia hymnal, so when distant communities came together to sing the people could all sing the same songs. But a letter from western Pennsylvania was read that day before the conference, saying, "We are all young people with little experience in music and we need at least one tune with music given that can be sung on every hymn in the book. Therefore we can not accept the Franconia hymnal (which has music for Psalms only)." This reading swayed the conference, so the Lancaster churches proceeded in publishing their own hymnal in 1804. *U*

—Amos Hoover farms and owns the Muddy Creek Farm Library



# Mennonite and Related Church Historians and Committees

This directory lists North American Mennonite, Amish and related historical committees, societies, conference historians, and interpretation centers. *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* publishes this list annually and would appreciate any updates or corrections from our readers.

Note the additions of the Howard-Miami Counties Heritage and Genealogical Society, and the Missionary Church Archives and Historical Collection.

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**Atlantic Coast Conference Historian**, Margaret Derstine, 2001 Harrisburg Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601 717 687-8259

**Brethren in Christ Church**, E. Morris Sider, Archives of Brethren in Christ Church, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027 717 691-6048

**California Mennonite Historical Society**, Peter J. Klassen, 4824 East Butler, Fresno CA 93727  
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419 358- 6017

**Conference of Mennonites in Alberta**, Henry D. Goerzen, R 1, Didsbury, AB T0M 0W0  
403 335-8414

**Conference of Mennonites in Canada History and Archives**

**Committee**, Lawrence Klippenstein, Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftsbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4  
204 888-6781

**Conservative Mennonite Conference Historical Committee**, Elmer S. Yoder, 3511 Edison Street, Hartville OH 44632 216 877-9566

**Delaware Mennonite Historical Association**, John J. Yoder, Box 238, Greenwood, DE 19950

**Essex-Kent Mennonite Historical Association**, 31 Pickwick Drive, Leamington; mailing address: Harold Thiessen, Route 4, Leamington, ON N8H 3V7

**General Conference Mennonite Church**, John Thiesen, Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, KS 67117 316 283-2500  
E-mail: jthiesen@menno.bethelks.edu

**Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust**, Galen Horst-Martz, 6133 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144  
215 843-0943

**Hans Herr House Museum**, Martin A. Franke, 1849 Hans Herr Dr. Willow Street, PA 17584  
717 464-4438

**Heritage Historical Library**, David Luthy, Route 4, Aylmer, ON Canada N5H 2R3

**Howard-Miami Counties Heritage and Genealogical Society**, Elaine Sommers Rich, 112, S. Spring St., Bluffton, OH 45817

**Illinois Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society and Illinois Conference Historian**, Edwin J. Stalter, Mennonite Heritage Center, Box 1007, Metamora, IL 61548  
309 367-2551 or 815 796-2918

**Indiana-Michigan Conference Historian**, Russell Krabill, 26221 Vista Lane, Elkhart, IN 46517

219 522-6869

**Juniata Mennonite Historical Society**, Noah L. Zimmerman, The Historical Center, HCR 63, Richfield, PA 17086 717 694-3543

**Kidron Community Historical Society**, Wayne Liechty, Box 14, Kidron, OH 44636 216 857-3375

**Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society**, Carolyn Charles Wenger, 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, PA 17602  
717 393- 9745

**Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society**, Lawrence Klippenstein, 484 Berkley Street, Winnipeg, MB R3R 1J9 204 888-6718

**Meetingplace, The**, Curtis Brubaker, 33 King Street, St. Jacobs, ON N0B 2N0  
519 664-3518

**Menno-Hof**, Tim Lichti, Box 701, Shippshewana, IN 46565  
219 768-4117

**Menno Simons Library and Archives**, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22801 703 432-4000  
E-mail: lehmanjo@lib.emu.edu

**Mennonite Archival Centre**, Hugo Friesen, Columbia Bible College, 2940 Clearbrook Road, Clearbrook, BC V2T 2Z8  
604 853-3358

**Mennonite Archives of Ontario**, Samuel Steiner, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6  
519 885-0220 ext. 238 E-mail: steiner@watservl.uwaterloo.ca

**Mennonite Brethren Churches (Canada) Historical Committee**, Abe Dueck, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 169 Riverton Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5 204 669-6575

**Mennonite Brethren Conference (North American) Historical Commission**, Paul Toews, Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 4824 East Butler, Fresno, CA 93727 209 453-2225



**Mennonite Brethren Church (USA)**, Peggy Goertzen, Center for MB Studies, Tabor College, Hillsboro, KS 67063 316 947-3121

**Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada**, Vera Martin, R 2, West Montrose, ON N0B 2V0 519 669-5379

**Mennonite Church Historical Association**, John E. Sharp, Historical Committee and Archives of the Mennonite Church, 1700 South Main, Goshen, IN 46526 219 535-7477 E-mail: johnes@Goshen.edu

**Mennonite Historical Association of the Cumberland Valley**, Roy M. Showalter, Box 335, State Line, PA 17263 301 733- 2184

**Mennonite Historical Library**, Ann Hilty, Bluffton College, Bluffton, OH 45817 419 358-3365

**Mennonite Historical Library**, John D. Roth, Goshen College, 1700 South Main, Goshen, IN 46526 219 535-7418 E-mail: johndr@Goshen.edu

**Mennonite Historical Society**, Walter Sawatsky, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517 219 295-3726

**Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta**, Henry D. Goerzen, 76 Skyline Cres NE, Calgary AB T1Y 4V9 403 275-6935

**Mennonite Historical Society of Canada**, Ted E. Friesen, Box 720, Altona, MB R0G 0B0 204 324-6401

**Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania**, Carolyn S. Nolan, The MeetingHouse, 565 Yoder Road, Box 82, Harleysville, PA 19438 215 256-3020

**Mennonite Historical Society of Iowa**, Lois Swartzentruber Gugel, archivist, 710 12th Street, Kalona, IA 52247 319 656-3732

**Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario**, Reg Good, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6 519 885-0220 E-mail: rgood@library.uwaterloo.ca

**Mennonite Information Center**, Dorothy Brenneman, 5798

County Rd. 77, Box 324, Berlin, OH 44610

**Mennonite Library and Archives**, John D. Thiesen, Bethel College, North Newton, KS 67117 316 283-2500 ext. 304 E-mail: jthiesen@menno.bethelks.edu

**Michiana Anabaptist Historians**, John F. Murray, 303 East Indiana, Kouts, IN 46347 219 766-3981

**Mifflin County Mennonite Historical Society**, Paul Bender, PO Box 5603, Belleville, PA 17004 717 935-2598 or 717 935-5574

**Missionary Church Archives and Historical Collection**, Tim Erdel, Bethel College, 1001 W. McKinley Ave., Mishawaka, IN 46545 219 259-8511

**Muddy Creek Farm Library**, Amos B. and Nora B. Hoover, 376 N. Muddy Creek Road, Denver, PA 17517 215 848-4849

**Nebraska Mennonite Historical Society**, Eldon Hostetler, 1014 First Street, Apt. 6, Milford, NE 68405 402 761-3072

**North Central Mennonite Conference Historian**, Melvin Hochstetler, Route 1, Box 116, Wolford, ND 58385 701 583-2562

**Northern District Conference**, Rachel Senner, Freeman Academy, 748 South Main, Freeman, SD 57209 605 925-4237

**Northwest Conference Historian**, Harry Stauffer, Route 1, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0 403 662-2144

**Ohio Amish Library**, Paul Kline, 4292 Star Route 39, Millersburg, OH 44654 216 893-2883

**Ohio Conference Historical Committee**, Kenneth Nisly, 3781 Cranwood Street NW, North Canton, OH 44720 216 494-0120

**Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society**, Hope K. Lind, 28773, Gimpl Hill Road, Eugene, OR 97402 503 344-5974

**Pacific Northwest Conference**, Margaret Shetler, 5326 Briar Knob Loop NE, Scotts Mills, OR 97375 503 873-6406

**The People's Place**, Merle and Phyllis Pellman Good, Main Street, Intercourse, PA 17534 717 768-7171

**Pequea Bruderschaft Library**, on Old Leacock Road, one-fourth mile south of Gordonville, mailing address: 176 North Hollander Road, Gordonville, PA 17529

**Saskatchewan Mennonite Historical Society**, Dick H. Epp, 2326 Cairns Avenue, Saskatoon, Sask. Canada S7J 1V1

**Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians**, Laban Peachey, R 10, Box 206, Harrisonburg, VA 22801 703 833-5131

**Stark County Mennonite and Amish Historical Society**, Elmer S. Yoder, 3511 Edison Street NE, Hartville, OH 44632 216 877-9566

**Southeast Mennonite Conference**, Martin W. Lehman, conference historian, 765 Dean Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34237 813 366-3381

**South Central Conference Historian**, Bernice L. Hostetler, Route 2, Box 77, Harper, KS 67058 316 896-2040

**Swiss Community Historical Society**, Keith Sommer, Box 5, Bluffton, OH 45817

**Swiss Heritage Society**, Claren Neuenschwander, 805 W. Van Buren, Berne, IN 219 587-2784

**Virginia Conference Historical Committee**, James O. Lehman, Menno Simons Historical Library and Archives, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22801 703 432-4170 E-mail: lehmanjo@lib.emu.edu

**Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups**, Donald B. Kraybill, Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA 17022 717 367-1151

**Western District Conference Historical Committee**, Hilde Schmidt, Box 306, North Newton, KS 67117 316 283-6300



# John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest Winners 1995



Steven Nolt, University of Notre Dame

## Class I - Seminary and Graduate School

**First place:** Steven Nolt, University of Notre Dame, *A Creative and Formative Encounter: Mennonites and the Biblical Seminary in New York.*

**Second place:** Glenn Wiebe, Wichita State University, *General Exodus: The Kansas Mennonite Migration to Canada During World War One.*

**Third place:** Janis Thiessen, University of Manitoba, *Working with Friesens: Labour Within a Mennonite Business, 1933-1995.*

## Class II - Undergraduate College and University

**First place (a tie):** Valerie Schrag, Bethel College (Kansas), *Menno Schrag and the Mennonite Weekly Review: A Voice and Vision for the Mennonite People*, and Angela Showalter, Goshen College, *Growing up in a Crumbling World: World War II Poland as Remembered by a Mennonite Woman.*

**Second place:** LeAnne Zook, Eastern Mennonite University, *Daughters of Philip: Single Mennonite Women Serving with Mennonite Central Committee During the 1950s.*

**Third place:** Marcus Shantz, Conrad Grebel College, *Menno's Perfect Christ and Marpeck's Patient Jesus, Two Versions of Christocentric Spirituality in Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism.*

Thirteen students in two academic levels submitted papers on various topics in Mennonite studies. In each class first-place winners are awarded \$100; second place, \$50; and third place, \$25. Winners also receive a one-year subscription to the Mennonite Quarterly Review. All entrants receive a one-year subscription to the Mennonite Historical Bulletin.

This year's entries were judged by Leonard Gross, Archives of the



Valerie Schrag, Bethel College

Mennonite Church; Gerald Brunk, Eastern Mennonite Seminary; and Beulah S. Hostetler, former member, Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church.

The annual contest is sponsored by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church, located in Goshen, Indiana, and is named in honor of John Horsch (1867-1941), the German American Mennonite historian and polemicist who did much to reawaken interest in Anabaptist and Mennonite studies in the 20th century. The deadline for submission of entries for next year's contest is June 15, 1996.

## Archives of the Mennonite Church

By Dennis Stoesz

What follows is a sampling of personal papers and organizational records that have come into the

archives during 1995. They are listed alphabetically by the name of the collection.

**Anderson, Lawrence C.** Papers, 1963-1991, including correspondence, research files, lecture notes, unpublished and published articles, and copies of some primary source materials which focus on Anderson's interest and research on Hutterites, Amish, and Mennonites.

He was a professor of geography at Mankato State College, Minnesota. Collection also includes files on the geography of religion and various utopian and collective settlements. 6.5 linear feet. Donor: Lawrence C. Anderson.

**Gross, Paul S., Hutterite Sermon Collection.** Hutterite sermons and *Vorreden* (introductory sermons) which virtually all date from the



16th and 17th centuries, when the Hutterites lived in Moravia (Czech Republic) and Slovakia (Hungary). Sermons are organized by the passage of Scripture used, Matthew through Revelation, and then Genesis through Sirach. A few of them have been identified by their use: wedding, funeral, Easter, Christmas, and church rules and discipline (1651). The sermons are handwritten in Gothic script and are in the German language. The collection includes 584 sermons and 267 *Vorreden*, copied by many individuals including those copied by Elias Walter, Standoff Colony, Alberta, between 1899 and 1917. These sermons form the largest *sammlung* of Hutterite sermons found at one place, and are the result of Gross's efforts through the years. 6.8 linear feet. Donor: Paul S. Gross and the Spokane Hutterite Colony, Washington.

**Kauffman, Kathy A., Oral History Project.** Tapes, 1993-1994, focusing on the experience of eight women on faculty at Goshen College, spanning sixty years, 1927-1987: Mary Eleanor Bender, Viola Good (1907-1993), Mary Katherine Nafziger, Mary Oyer, Mary Royer, Edna Shantz, Lois Winey, and Olive Wyse. Interviews by Kauffman include questions about early growing-up years, education, work history, and experience at Goshen College. Transcripts included. 13 cassette tapes, 5 linear inches. Donor: Kathy A. Kauffman, Goshen, Indiana.

**Lehman, Stella (Sharp) and Joseph L.** Correspondence, 1918-1934, mostly from Stella (Sharp) Lehman, Kenmare, North Dakota, to her parents-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. David S. Lehman, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Collection includes some correspondence from Joseph L. Lehman (1898-1928); typical dress clothes worn by him as a boy; and *Byerly's Spelling Book* used by Christian Sharp, John Zook, and Stella Sharp. Stella married Joseph



*Editor Elizabeth Showalter with her first issue of Words of Cheer, 1949.*

on October 27, 1920, and they had seven children before Joseph died in 1928. 5 linear inches. Donor: Genevieve (Lehman) Buckwalter, Goshen, Indiana, on behalf of the family.

**Mennonite Central Committee, 1920- , Akron, Pennsylvania.** Records, 1954-1994, including Information Services files, 1954-1984; Washington Office files, 1968-1988; Reference books and files, 1960-1994; and peace booklets and pamphlets, 1956-1984. The paper copies of the central correspondence and report files for 1984 are not included here, since they are currently being microfilmed. 5 linear feet. Donor: Irene Leaman, Records, Library, and Archives Manager.

**Mennonite Health Association, 1952-1994, Goshen, Indiana.** Records, 1980-1994, including minutes and reports of annual meetings, correspondence from program files, photographs, displays and artifacts, which reflect this Association's role of providing a resource and network for Mennonites involved in the health field as professionals and volunteers, and as part of various agencies and institutions. Directors for this time period were H. Ernest Bennett, 1980-1990, Paul N. Kraybill, 1990-1993, and Dean Preheim-Bartel, 1993-1994. In 1994, this work was taken over by

Mennonite Health Services, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. 20 linear feet. Donor: Rachel Eby and Dean Preheim-Bartel, Goshen, Indiana.

**Miller, Andrew A., 1918-1992.** Papers, 1948-1955, including correspondence, writings and publications that reflect Miller's involvement in the Amish mission movement in Holmes County, Ohio. Publications for those years included *Amish Christian Fellowship Bulletin*, *Christian Fellowship Review and Witnessing*, 1952-1955. Also some materials on Goodwill Book Exchange, 1951-1954; Maple Grove Mission church, 1955-1963; sermons from Gospel Broadcasts, 1962-1964; photographs, 1955; and an account book, 1935-1939. 15 linear inches. Donor: Levi Miller, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania.

**Salem Mennonite Church, 1889- , New Paris, Indiana.** Church records which include business meetings, 1918-1975; Young People's meetings, 1947-1976; Faith and Practice Committee, 1950-1954; Sewing Circle, 1956-1965; News Letters, 1961-1968; and a Church Directory, 1972. This church began in 1889 when the "Dutch" and "German" Mennonites built a joint meeting-place, and called it Salem. A history of the church was compiled by Marie Yoder in 1947-1948. 15 linear inches. Donor: Wayne Weaver, Goshen, Indiana.



**Showalter, Elizabeth A.** Papers, 1925-1991, reflecting Showalter's life as a student, writer, administrator, editor, and teacher. The materials up to and including 1959 consist of a scrapbook from Eastern Mennonite School and College, 1925-1934; her 1934 thesis on "Bird Study as a Hobby," which launched her writing career and was published in *Youth Christian Companion* in 1935; two scrapbooks of Showalter's published articles, 1937-1980; correspondence, 1949-1959, and diary, 1948-1951, from her work at Mennonite Publishing House as editor and writer of *Words of Cheer*, and of Summer Bible School and Sunday School curriculum. After 1959, the correspondence, diaries, and scrapbooks reflect Showalter's involvement as a teacher in Nigeria, 1960 and 1966-1967; her ongoing communication with missionaries and students in Africa, 1960-1975; as an administrator with Books Abroad in Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1961-1969; as a teacher at Goshen College, 1961-1963, and Eastern Mennonite College, 1967-1969; as a writer and editor with Laubach Literacy, 1964-1966; and as a student at Syracuse University, 1962-1965. In 1969 Showalter retired to Harrisonburg, Virginia, and started a Books Abroad program there, 1970-1991. 4.5 linear feet. Donor: Elizabeth A. Showalter.

**Southwest Mennonite Conference, 1948-1994, Downey, California.**

Records including conference reports and correspondence, 1975-1991; program files, 1986-1993; Ministerial Committee, 1988-1991; Council of Anabaptists in Los Angeles, 1991-1994; and financial records, 1988-1994. In 1994 this conference joined with the a portion of General Conference's Pacific District to become the Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference. Donor: Irene Mendoza, Executive Assistant, and Jeff Wright, Conference Coordinator.

Boehr, Ewanda (Siebert), *From Hemp and Flax Fields to Lands of*

## Recent Publications

*Wheat and Corn: Baehr-Bohr-Boehr Genealogy.* Langham, SK: 1995. Pp. 355. Order from: Esther Patkau, 2206 Wiggins Ave., Saskatoon, SK S7J 1W7.

Bowman, Bill, *Ancestors & Descendants of Rev. Henry (Shantz) Bauman 1867-1935.* Gananoque, ON: Published by author, 1995. Order from author: 215 South St., Gananoque, ON K7G 7A4.

Braun Family Tree Committee, *1995 Braun Family Tree.* Steinbach, MB: Braun Family, Martens Printing, 1995. \$30. Order from: Henry J. Braun, Box 1192, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0.

Brubaker, Darrel Leroy, *The Descendants of Isaac William Brubaker (1861-1937).* Des Moines, IA: Mary Lou Brubaker Briles. Order from publisher: 1015 Lester Ln., Des Moines, IA 50315.

Doerksen, Mrs. B. P. and Mrs. A. U. Klassen, *Genealogy of Peter K. Barkman 1826-1977.* Manitoba: Published by authors, 1977. Order from: Elizabeth Barkman Stewart, 417 E. Tulip Tree Dr., Warsaw, IN 46580.

Eash, Ora E., *Descendants of Samuel S. Eash and Susan J. Miller.* McMinnville, OR: Published by author, 1994. \$8.75. Order from author: 1627 W. 6th St., McMinnville, OR 97128.

Eshleman, Grace R., *The Family of Samuel C. Eshleman and Emma Jane Harnish.* Lancaster, PA: Published by author, 1995. Pp. 23. Order from author: 34 Springhouse Rd., Lancaster, PA 17603-6620.

Hochstetler, Daniel E., *Descendants of David J. and Magdalena Hochstetler.* Nappanee, IN: Evangel Press, 1995. Pp. 441 + index. Order from author: 1008 College Ave., Goshen, IN 46526.

Jess, Andy E., *Descendants of Daniel E. and Mary (Nissley) Borntrager 1871-1994.* Arthur, IL: Echo Printers, 1994. Pp. 412. \$13.75. Order from: Orla P. Miller, 7635W

600S, Topeka, IN 46571.

Joseph Jutzi Family Book Committee, *Joseph Jutzi and Marie Bender Family History and Genealogy.* Waterloo, ON: Published by authors, 1995. Order from: Lorraine Roth, 411-65 Westmount Rd. N, Waterloo, ON N2L 5G6.

The Juhnke Reunion Committee, *The Carl F.W. Juhnke and Frances Kaufman Family Record 1841 to 1955.* Wichita, KS: Larry Juhnke, 1995. Pp. 93. Order from: Jerry Juhnke, 200 Post Oak, Wichita, KS 67206.

Kerns, Wilmer L., *Frederick County VA: Settlement and Some First Families of Back Creek Valley 1730-1830.* Baltimore, MD: Gateway, 1995. \$49. Order from author: 4715 N 38th Pl., Arlington, VA 22207-2914.

McCornack, John C., *The Family of John P. Stutzman & Ida Gindlesperger.* Peoria, IL: Published by author, 1991. Pp. 54. \$15. Order from author: 5302 N. Arrow Dr., Peoria, IL 61614.

Miller, Harry D. and Lydia J. (Yoder) Miller, *Descendants of Samuel N. Miller and Sarah J. Petersheim 1876-1991.* West Union, OH: Gordonville, PA, 1992. Pp. 89. Order from: Harry D. Miller, 9501 Wheat Ridge Rd., West Union, OH 45693.

Miller, Ray, *Levi N. and Martha I. (Hochstetler) Bontrager Family History 1887-1993.* Columbus, NC: Published by author, 1994. Pp. 21. Order from author: PO Box 306, Columbus, NC 28722.

Further information on these books may be obtained from the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526.



## News and Notes

**Lorna Bergey**, Secretary of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, received Wilmot Township Local Architectural Conservatory Advisory Committee's first 1995 Heritage Award for her outstanding contribution to the preservation of local history.

Amos Hover reports that a movement is underfoot to produce a new edition of the *Unpartheyisches Gesangbuch*, first printed in 1804. At a historic meeting on April 22, 1995, with many Old Order Mennonite song leaders and Amish bishops present, it was agreed to make minor typographical corrections, and to replace the 62 archaic music notation bars with shaped notes as the Wenger and Stauffer Mennonites sing today. The sentiment of that meeting was voiced by the venerable song leader, teacher, fraktur artist and Amish bishop John F. Glick when he said, "Ei not kennte mir singe wie mir dün und wie die Wenger dün." It is anticipated that the new 41st edition of 20,000 copies will be in print by the end of 1995.

Guideposts Book Division, New York, will include an abridged version of *Rosanna of the Amish* by Joseph W. Yoder in a forthcoming volume of their condensed books series, according to Herald Press director Paul M. Schrock. Herald Press is also releasing a newly edited, newly illustrated trade paperback centennial edition this fall. Centennial? Rosanna, the main character, died in 1895.

The history of immigrant Peter Bitschi I (1725-1805), progenitor of the Beachy/Peachey lineage, was the theme of the Annual Meeting of the **Casselman River Area Amish and Mennonite Historians**, which met September 15-16, 1995. Over 200 participants from the various Amish and Mennonite traditions,

and from other religious groups as well, filled the Maple Glen Church at Grantsville, Maryland, where the meetings took place.

Speakers included Leroy Beachy, William C. Beachy, Virgil Miller, Paul H. and Marie Yoder, David I. Miller, Alvin J. Beachy, Arlene Schultz, Ada Maust, and Harvey Yoder. Laban Peachey and Kenneth L. Yoder were moderators, and Lowell Bender, Menno Beachy, and Percy Yoder served as song leaders.

Many participated in a bus tour to various local points, relating to Beachy family history. There was a fine balance throughout the presentations, combining the needed bare-bones genealogy with genuine family history which included the vitality of story and thoughtful interpretation in a manner that brought to life the Beachy contributions through the generations to the ongoing Casselman area culture and life.

CRAAMH began a decade ago for the purpose of strengthening the historical tradition of this discrete and significant geographic area of Amish and Mennonite life. The organization's journal is *The Historian*, now in its seventh year of publication.

Discussion of the impact of Frank Yoder's history of **Iowa Mennnite School**, *Opening a Window to the World*, was a main feature at the school's 50th anniversary celebration last July 14-16. Other highlights included an alumni art display and presentation of "Trees of the Wood," the story of IMS told in words, pictures, and music.

**North American Mennonite Archivists and Librarians (NAMAL)** met at Wichita '95. John Roth reported that the micro-filming of 51 Mennonite periodicals published in the United States has been completed. Other issues discussed included the future organizational structure of NAMAL, the possibility of forming a multi-

national Mennonite historical organization, and the creation of a Mennonite history listserve on the Internet.

The Regional Municipality of Waterloo recently approved the deaccessioning of the **Peter Erb House** located at Doon Heritage Crossroads in Kitchener. The house was built about 1820 for Peter Erb and his wife, Susannah, near the village of Bridgeport, which is now part of Kitchener. The Erb House is being offered as a gift to any non-profit museum or heritage agency.

A note relating to the **1888/1889 division among Mennonites in Ontario** was recently rediscovered among John F. Funk's papers in the Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana. It states that "David Martin seems to be trying to make a division in the Church. He is not quick in intellect and misunderstands things. . . . At a Conference at Berlin Ontario many years ago [it was] moved by Bishop Weber and seconded by Amos Cressman that J. Z. Kolb be Chairman to order or keep order in the meeting. This was opposed by Martin and Gayman; declared by the latter that it is not in accordance with the rules of special Conference held at Berlin in 1873, which calls for a Chairman as proposed. Yeas. Martin M. Bauman, S. Bowman and Cressman, Kolb, Wismer, Hoover & M. Rittenhouse. Nays. L. Hoover, Abm. Rittenhouse, A. Moyer, E. Snyder & Kulp."

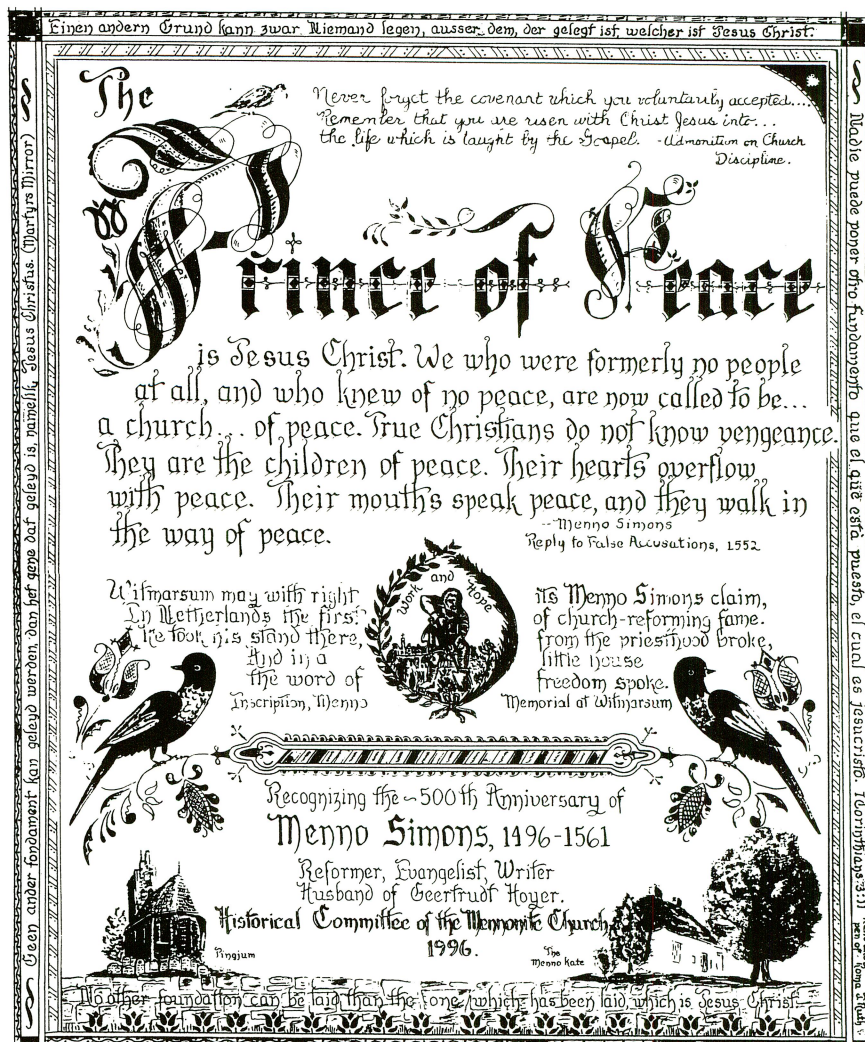
The Detweiler Meeting House Corporation, interested in the preservation of the **1855 Detweiler Meeting House**, west of Roseville, would like to hear from persons who are interested in the preservation of this historic building. Call Norman Shantz at 519 578-4258, or Lorna Bergey at 519 741-9951.



# Remembering the Birth of Menno Simons, 1496

To order your copies, use the order form below. (To preserve your copy of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, photocopy the form.)

This beautiful fraktur by Roma Ruth commemorates the 500th anniversary of Menno Simon's birth in 1496. Roma, an accomplished fraktur artist, is from Harleysville, Pa. The text was chosen by John L. Ruth, writer, filmmaker, and storyteller. This 15 x 18 four-color art piece was commissioned by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church. Full-color copies of the Commemorative Fraktur, signed and numbered, are available for \$25 from the Archives of the Mennonite Church.



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Art and text from the Menno Simons Commemorative Fraktur by Roma Ruth.

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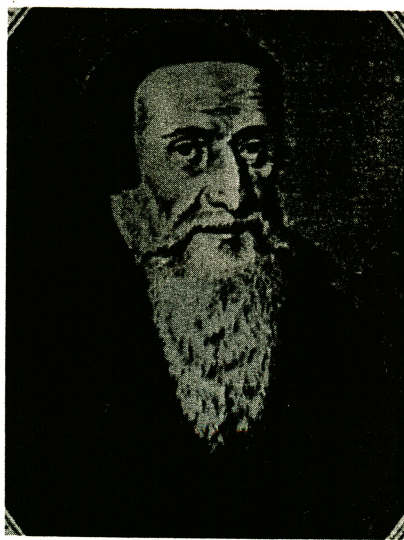
### The Portraits of Menno Simons



## by Irvin B. Horst

Translated from Dutch into English by Jo and Herman Tann

Eighty years ago G. J. Boekennoogen of the Netherlands, identified 63 known portraits of Menno Simons.<sup>1</sup> Two of them had been, according to him, incorrectly identified as portraits of Menno. Later research reveals that his own number one portrait, a rendition from the 16th century hanging in the Mennonite Church in Utrecht, is not a picture of Menno either [see *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* 6 (1980) 206]. Nevertheless, Boekennoogen's list of the 60 remaining portraits still gives an almost complete survey of all the



10 (H.6). Jan van de Velde. Engraving before 1636. This is a completely new portrait, based on the earlier representation.

portraits from that period till 1917—about 300 years.<sup>2</sup> After 1916, artists and sponsors, especially in the United States and Canada, were inspired anew by Menno Simons. A total count of the portraits of Menno from the beginning to the present (1986) would probably number 100.<sup>3</sup>

More important than the number is the question about the interest in the subject. Doubtless, most of the portraits were commissioned. It is probable that Jan Luyken was asked to make a full-page portrait for the 1681 edition of the *Opera Omnia Theologica*, containing theological works of Menno Simons. Another portrait, the woodcut of Warren Rohrer, was commissioned for the occasion of the 400th anniversary of Menno's death in 1961. Yet, it is also clear that the artists took personal

**Cover portraits - Center: 1 (H.24). Tom (Oliver Wendel) Sherk.** Oil painting, 1975. Commissioned by Myron S. Augsburg for Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Virginia, where the picture is now hanging. This portrait is strongly influenced by that of Jacobus Burghart; **Clockwise starting at top: 2 (H.2). Anonymous (Reiner Vinkeles?).** Engraving circa 1800, influenced by Van Sichem; **3. Rev. G. J. W. den Herder.** Linoleum cut, circa 1934. This portrait was sold to raise money to help the members of the Bruderhof to escape Nazi Germany through the Netherlands to England. Based on the engraving of Van Sichem; **4 (H.5). Jan van de Velde.** Engraving, c. 1630. Until now known as the second oldest portrait; **5 (H.4). Meinte Walta.** Poster, 1961. Made for a 1961 exhibition in Witmarsum commemorating the 400th anniversary of Menno's death. Based on the engraving of Van Sichem; **6 (H.11). Jan Luyken.** Etching 1681. This portrait appears in the collected works of Menno Simons, *Opera Omnia Theologica* (Amsterdam, 1681). Luyken is further known through his 104 etches in the second printing of the *Martyrs Mirror* (Amsterdam, 1685); **7 (H.23). Warren Rohrer.** Woodcut, 1961. Commissioned by Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Virginia. The work of Rohrer is to be found in important American museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He graduated from EMC, and in 1984 was chosen as "alumnus of the year."; **8 (H.15). Clement Nachtegaal.** Engraving, c. 1730. Also influenced by Burghart. Instead of the usual representation, signed with K.T., we have here a portrait which is signed with M.D.; **9 (H.1). Christoffel van Sichem.** Engraving circa 1608. This is considered to be the oldest portrait of Menno Simons, who died in 1561. Van Sichem was Roman Catholic; some people see in the brim of the hat the ears of a donkey, meant to ridicule Menno and his followers. This engraving appeared separately on a small folio page and later in *Het Toneel der Hoofd-Ketteren* (Middleburg, 1677).

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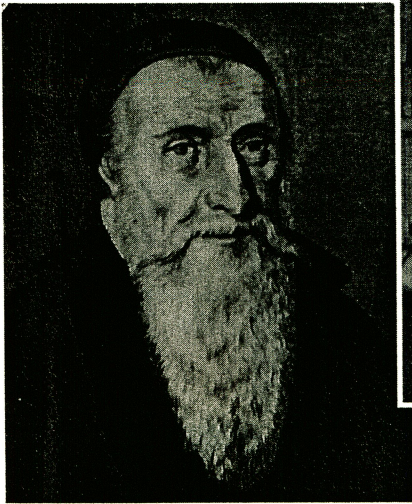
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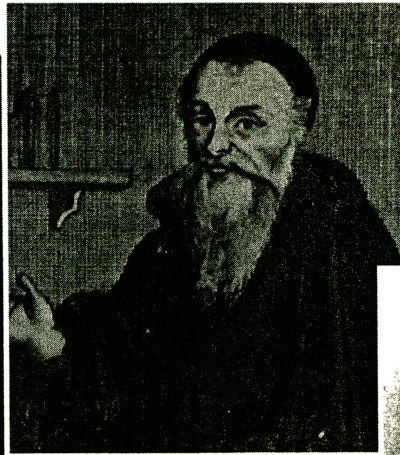
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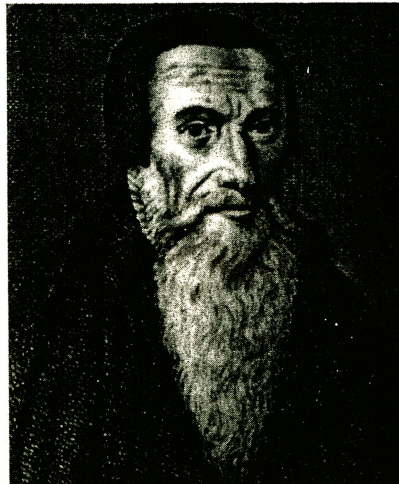
**11 (H.7).** Jan van de Velde. Engraving. Published by Corn. Koning in Haarlem. This is probably a new portrait, because Menno is wearing a skullcap that shows his ears and a little bit of a hair lock on his forehead. His date of death is added on the bottom right-hand side.

**12 (H.13).** Jacobus Burghart. Engraving, 1683. This portrait appeared two years after the etching of Jan Luyken. It has served as an example for several later portraits of Menno. It is noteworthy enough to be the only portrait signed by Burghart. It was later reproduced by the Mennonite Church in Hamburg, where the original was probably created. Even though a similarity exists between the portraits of Luyken and Burghart, the differences, above all when comparing the beards, show that Burghart probably was not familiar with the earlier portraits.



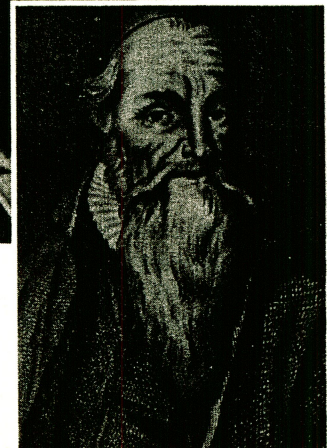
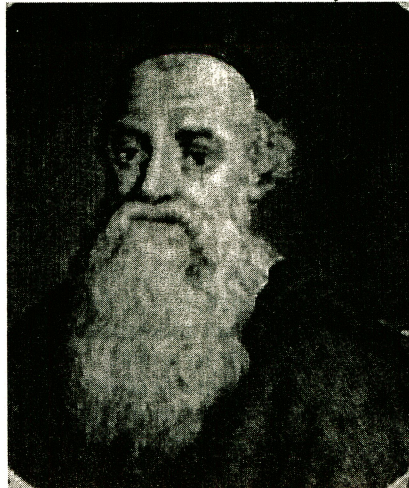
**13 (H.9).** Anonymous. This engraving appeared in *Alte und Neue Schwarm-Geister-Bruth* (Frankfurt a.M., 1702).

**14 (H.10).** Josef Keller. Engraving, c. 1830. This portrait shows features of Van de Velde's work and of No. 13.



**15 (H.8).** Jan Casper Philips. Engraving, 1743. Based on the portrait of Jan van de Velde.

**16 (H.14).** L. E. F. Garreau. Engraving, 1788. Influenced by Burghart.

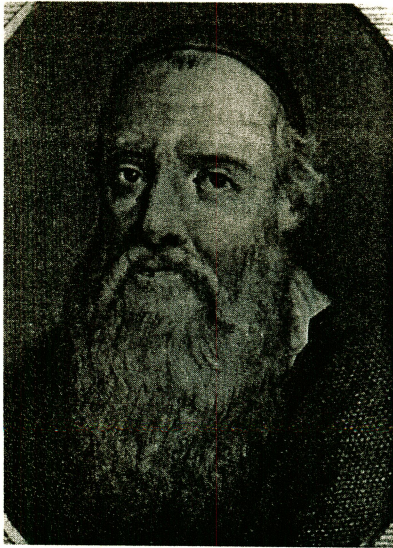


**17 (H.12).** Jacobus Buys, designer; Reinier Vinkeles, engraver, 1792. Influenced by the portrait by Jan Luyken.

interest in their projects. Menno's facial features on the portrait by Jan Luyken show the influence of the work of Jan van de Velde, although the central placement of the Bible in Luyken's portrait is his own personal inspiration. Warren Rohrer called the portrait he made a "personal statement—a symbol of Menno Simon's contribution rather than a literal photograph or picture."

The portraits, we can assume, have symbolic meaning. But what do they symbolize? To be able to answer this question, we have to go back to the personal vision of the author or to the impressions of the viewer. We can say that Luyken has pictured Menno as a powerful preacher



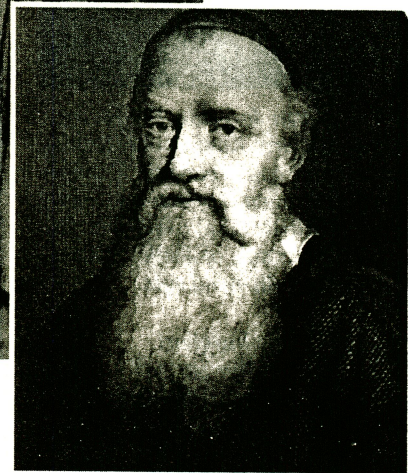


18 (H.16). Reinier Vinkeles. Engraving, circa 1800. Also influenced by Burghart.

19 (H.18). C. Hotze. Litho, c. 1856. Influenced by Burghart.



20 (H.19). Romeyn de Hooghe. Etching, 1701. Found in the Dutch translation of the German, Gottfried Arnold's, *Historie der Kerken en Ketteren* (Amsterdam, 1701). This portrait is a free imitation of the portrait by Josef Keller.



21 (H.17). Johannes Philippus Lange. Engraving, 1837. Influenced by Burghart. Published in A.M. Cramer, *The Life and the Accomplishments of Menno Simons* (Amsterdam, 1837).

whose heart was influenced by the biblical message. Jacobus Burghart, whose 1683 engraving has been copied many times, shows Menno as a pietist. Artists render a depiction of the spiritual climate of their time. It is therefore no wonder that Arend Hendriks emphasized the psychological side of Menno. In 1961 Warren Rohrer utilized an expressionistic interpretation. This portrait, more than any other one, is

found in contemporary journals.

More important than the quantity of portraits, is the artistic quality. It is somewhat ironic to speak about this in connection with the portraits of a leader of persecuted disciples of Christ who were called "Anabaptists." The portraits, however, are from a later period when Menno's followers had already adjusted themselves to the world. They no longer disapproved of the prevailing culture or of wealth. Boekenoogen pointed out that most of the portraits were created by experienced artists. Christoffel van Sichem, who made the oldest known portrait, about 1610, was a well-known and capable portraitist. He was Roman Catholic, which is probably why he made a ridiculous presentation of

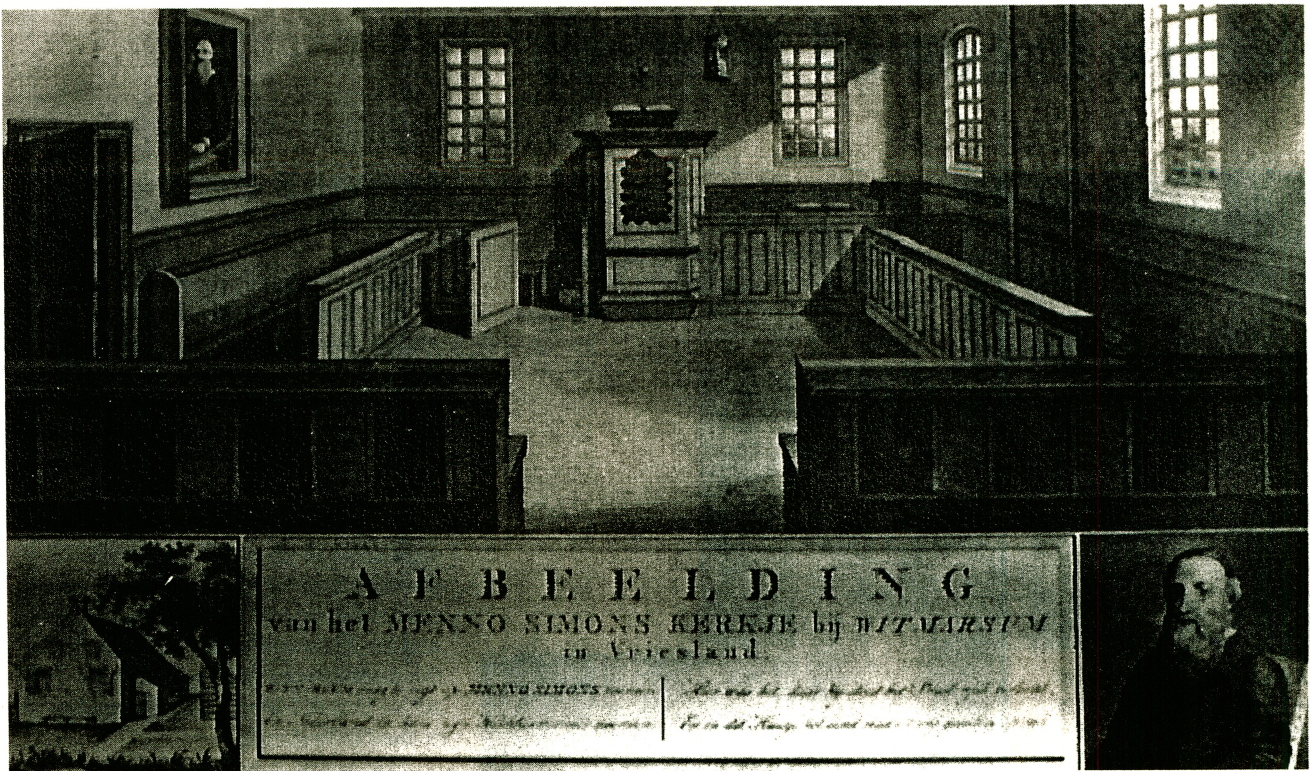


22 (H.21). Alexander Harder. Oil painting, 1935. Harder, born in Russia in 1901, was a German Mennonite. In his portrait are recurring artistic themes of Jan Luyken and Jacobus Burghart. The picture is hanging in the Mennonite Historical Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas.

Menno. Jan van de Velde, Jan Luyken and Romeyn de Hooghe all mastered the art of etching on a copper plate. Jacobus Burghart is rather unknown, but his portrait is the best from an artistic viewpoint. The decorations along the borders make Menno appear to be a nobleman or German priest.

In general, the portraits are highly subjective interpretations of Menno. Some are even romantic. The portrait by Arend Hendriks is on the one hand very cleverly made, but on the other hand may be a too-worldly interpretation. It reveals clearly the emptiness of certain aspects of the 19th century. It was the beginning of a new under-





23 (H.20). Dirk Sluyter according to H. Thepass. Engraving, c. 1828. This picture of the interior of the so-called Menno Simons' little church in Witmarsum shows a reproduction of a picture by Willem Bartel van der Kooi that is now hanging in the new church building of the Doopsgezinde (Mennonite) Congregation in Witmarsum. The Menno Simons little church stood on the place where the Menno Simons monument is now standing. According to tradition, Menno met his followers on the farm that was located at this place. At the bottom left of the engraving is the exterior of the Menno Simons' little church, and at the bottom right is a portrait of Menno. The four-line stanza that was originally seen on a stone in the front wall of the Menno Simons little church is now standing at the entrance to the Menno Simons monument.

24 (H.22). Arend Hendriks. Engraving, 1948. Hendriks was commissioned to give a psychological interpretation in which other portraits were to be worked in. This portrait has been imitated numerous times in North America.



standing of Menno. On the contrary, the 1975 portrait by Tom Shenk represents a return to the old Burghart tradition. We are still waiting for a portrait where Menno is presented above all as a dynamic leader of the Mennonite Brotherhood, who did not want to be a ruler, but a servant.

The earliest known portrait is that of Christoffel van Sichem, circa 1608. The most recent interpretation reviewed in this article is Tom Shenk's 1975 oil painting. *L*

This article was originally published in *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*, LIII (1986-87) 3-106. It was translated by Jo and Herman Tann (1996) by permission of the author, and edited by Leonard Gross and the editor. The numbers in parentheses preceded by the letter H. indicate Horst's numbering.

1. G. J. Boekennoogen, "De portretten van Menno Simons," *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*, LIII (1916) 3-106.

2. Further investigation would undoubtedly reveal other differences and undiscovered pictures. One of them is depicted in Johann Groening, *Historie der heutigen Religionen* (Hamburg, 1711) 92.

3. Excluded are commercial souvenirs such as little spoons, little cups, wall plates, and T-shirts used for purposes of advertising. Boekennoogen has discussed medals (portraying Menno) in some depth.

—Irvin Horst taught Mennonite history at EMC and the University of Amsterdam. He is now scholar in residence with the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.



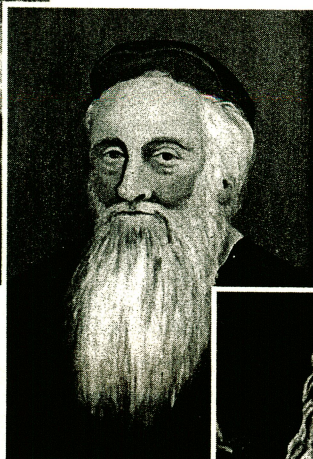
# More Faces of Menno

by John E. Sharp



**Above: A.** This bas-relief image of Menno was once featured on a marker in Wuestenfeld, Germany. The plaque was stolen in the early fifties, and probably was sold for scrap metal. The photo was taken by Herman Schultz, a student in Hamburg, and given to Reynold Sawatsky while serving under MCC in northern Germany.  
Credit: Reynold Sawatsky Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

**Below: B.** Painted by Dr. Harold Wittig, Ramsey, New York, 1996, this portrait of Menno is among the many Christian leaders displayed in the Christian Hall of Fame, Canton, Ohio.  
Credit: Christian Hall of Fame.



**Above: D.** Painted by Heinz Gangel, this image of Menno is one of hundreds of biblical and historical figures on an amazing 265 foot cyclorama called "Behalt," in the Mennonite Information Center, Berlin, Ohio.



**Above: C.** Imprinted with Jakob Burkhard's 1683 painting, c. 1870, this medal found many uses in the Mennonite congregation of Hamburg-Altona, Germany. The reverse side of the medal shows the seal of this congregation with members from both these neighboring cities. Originally medals like this were presented to baptismal candidates in this congregation as remembrances of their day of baptism. Later this medal was reproduced for various congregational anniversary celebrations. This photo is of a 1937 printing using the original stamp. The dates of Menno's birth and death, now known to be incorrect, reflect the level of scholarship at that time.  
Credit: Leonard Gross Artifact Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Faces of Menno continue to appear in surprising numbers and places. Interest in Menno's image has not waned since the publication of the articles by Boekenoongen in 1916 or Irvin Horst in 1986. In recent years, and particularly during this year's commemoration of his 500th birthday, Menno's face has begun appearing more often—from the premier issue of *Mennonot*, to the cover of a new Mennonite history text for Mennonite high schools, to the publications of a creative and active Dutch Mennonite committee in the Netherlands.

This article is not a comprehensive summary of all portraits of Menno since Tom Shenk's "self-portrait" in 1975, but only a sampling of the light-hearted drawings and caricatures which have appeared in recent years, as well as a few older, more serious portraits, which Irvin Horst did not include in his 1986 survey. *L*



**Left: E.** Since challenging observers to find him in "Where's Menno at the Relief Sale," Menno has reappeared in *Festival Quarterly*, Winter 1996. Artwork by Cheryl Benner. From *The Mennonite Starter*

Kit by Haas and Nolt. Copyright 1993 by Good Books. Used by permission. All rights reserved.





**Left: G.** This caricature drawn by Mike Burrell will appear on the cover of *Through Fire & Water, an Overview of Mennonite History*. This high school history text, written by Harry Loewen and Steve Nolt, with Carol Duerksen and Elwood Yoder, will be published by Herald Press later this year.



**Left: H.** From the Netherlands comes this silk screen of multiple images of Menno designed by Aiso Betten in 1995. It was commissioned by the Duth Menno-500 Committee for this year's commemoration.

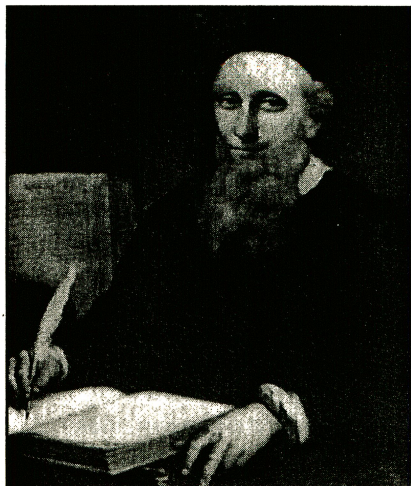


**Left: I.** This version of a nonchalant Menno appeared in the *Dutch Mennonite Weekly*, January 1996.

**Below: F.** Menno Lisa was featured on the cover of the premier issue of *Mennonot*, the periodical "for Mennos on the margins," Fall 1993. This tongue-in-cheek production was credited to an anonymous mid-18th century Mennonite artist. Actually, coeditor Steve Mullet created the image by implanting the face of Mona Lisa onto an image of Menno Simons using digital image editing software. He noted that he hadn't given it much "fore-thought, though in retrospect, I think it was a really fun and effective image. Mona Lisa is so subtle in expression herself, which made the effect of her face transplant onto Menno pretty laid-back, yet still somewhat striking. I don't know—perhaps it's the visual equivalent of dry, witty humor."

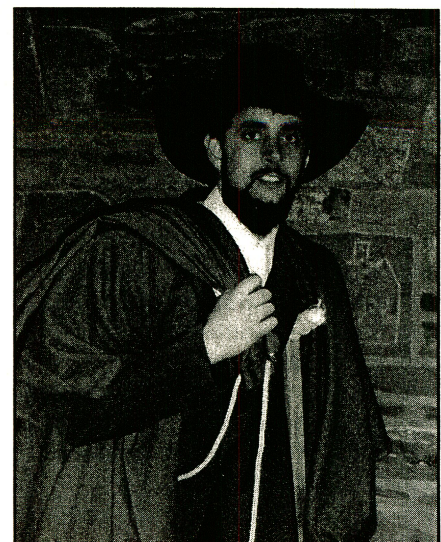


**Above: J.** This visual depiction of Menno's legendary, accidental, and sudden descent into the barrel of syrup which had served as his preaching pulpit is a game card from *Glaubenszeugen, Kirchengeschichtliches Quartett* (Frankfurt a. M.). This game, created by Eugen F. Penner, with artwork by Erwin Maier, was given to the Mennonite Historical Library by H. S. Bender, November 3, 1955.



**Right: L.** Modern Menno Joel Alderfer, Harleysville, Pennsylvania, makes appearances in Franconia Conference congregations and gatherings wherever he is invited. Joel tells the story of the fugitive preacher in first person.

**Right: K.** This Menno speaks from the pages of the Mennonite Brethren Christian Leader. In a special column marking the quinqucentennial year of his birth, titled "Simons Says," Menno's pen answers questions put to him by the editor. Drawing by Lorlie Barkman.





# Present at the Inception: Menno Simons and the Beginnings of Dutch Anabaptism

by Abraham Friesen

Dutch Anabaptism, like that in Zurich, Switzerland, was born at a revolutionary point in time: the first believers baptism took place in Zurich on January 21, 1525, at the very height of the great Peasant War; Menno's conversion took place on the eve of the collapse of the revolutionary Muenster movement in the spring of 1535. These "coincidences" led to repeated charges of sedition and outright revolution against the Anabaptists. Menno Simons especially had to defend himself against the charge of being a Muensterite at nearly every turn. He repeatedly denied the charge, at times with some vehemence. But not everyone believed him at the time or since; even some Mennonites have had their doubts and wondered if they could really trust Menno's word.

Scholars were, for many years, even more skeptical, with Christoph Bornhaeuser, a German Reformed scholar arguing, not that many years ago, that Menno had been a Muensterite before the collapse of the movement in the summer of 1535. And Christian Sepp, a Dutch Mennonite historian, informed his readers in 1872 that he could recall that his father's generation had still been fearful that someone, somewhere would discover the "smoking gun" that would link Menno to the Muensterites. The answer we give this issue matters, therefore, for if Menno lied in this instance, can he be trusted in any other?

Anabaptism was first brought to northern Germany and the Netherlands by Melchior Hoffmann (1495-1543) in 1529. Earlier a lay

Lutheran missionary, he had gotten into trouble with the governing authorities in the Hansa cities of northern Germany because of certain radical tendencies and chiliastic speculations. Recalled to Wittenberg to be counseled by Luther in 1525, he eventually broke with him over the interpretation of the Eucharist. As a consequence, he decided—in 1529—to travel south to Strasbourg where some of Luther's eucharistic opponents lived. But even these—Martin Bucer and Wolfgang Capito, the Reformers of the city—soon rejected him.

As a consequence, Hoffmann joined himself to the city's mystical Anabaptists, was rebaptized by them, came to see himself as a second Elijah. He had already written a commentary on the book of Daniel in 1526, and adopted Caspar von Schwenckfeld's doctrine of the incarnation which held that Christ had not taken on sinful, human flesh when he became man. Schwenckfeld therefore spoke of the "heavenly flesh of Christ."

In May of 1530 Hoffmann returned to the north where, in Emden, he baptized some three hundred persons and established the first continuous Anabaptist churches in the region. Nowhere did the movement spread more rapidly than here. Hoffmann, however, soon went back to Strasbourg because of his belief that Christ would return there in 1533. In between, he made one more trip to the north; he may have baptized Dirk and Obbe Philips at this time.

Though Hoffmann and his followers were not initially revolutionaries, Hoffmann did predict that the return of Christ had to be preceded by a great cleansing of the godless.

This argument certainly sounded revolutionary to the governing authorities, and it got him imprisoned in Strasbourg in 1533 where he languished until his death in 1543.

In the meantime, 1533 came and went without Christ's return. This caused two of Hoffmann's Dutch followers, Jan Matthys and Jan of Leiden, to declare that Hoffmann had erred both as to the time and place of Christ's return. In their turn they proclaimed Muenster to be the "New Jerusalem" where the reign of Christ would begin. Bernard Rothmann, a former Lutheran who had also been influenced by people he had met in Strasbourg during the year of 1531, as well as by the so-called "Wassenburg Predicanten" later on in Muenster, began to reform the city in 1532.

By 1533 Rothmann was defending believers baptism and the symbolic interpretation of the Eucharist against both Lutheran and Catholic opponents at the Muenster Colloquy. He was later to assert that he and his followers had, at the time, been fully prepared to suffer for Christ like the early church, but the arrival of Jan of Leiden in Muenster in January 1534, and Jan Matthys in February 1534, changed everything. Introducing adult baptism into the city, they also argued that since they were living in the last days, in which the tares would be removed from the wheat, it was right and proper to defend the gospel with the sword. But that gospel was increasingly based on the Old Testament, with the millennial kingdom of God on earth gradually replacing the renewal of the apostolic church. And so they took over the city.

No sooner had they done so,



than the bishop of Muenster laid siege to the city. A little later he was assisted by the troops of Duke Philip of Hesse, a Protestant. In order to dispel the gloom that settled over the city as a consequence of the siege, Jan Matthys predicted that God would judge the wicked on Easter 1534 and free the city. When Easter—5 April 1534—arrived all the inhabitants stood on the city walls expecting their salvation and the destruction of the godless.

Once again, however, nothing happened. To rehabilitate his tarnished prophetic honor, Matthys decided, with a number of followers, to emulate Gideon of old and sally forth from the city to slay the enemy. Instead, he and his followers were mercilessly slaughtered by the Landsknechte, his head was severed from his body, stuck on a pike and paraded around the city walls for all within to see. In the wake of these events, Jan of Leiden, a former actor and drifter, staged his own election as king of the New Jerusalem. From Muenster the revolutionary movement spread to Amsterdam and Bolsward. It was in the latter place that Menno's younger brother, Pieter, became involved and was executed.

Not all Melchiorites were involved in this revolutionary activity. Dirk and Obbe Philips could never quite accept these tendencies and eventually rejected them. But Obbe, in 1540, felt so compromised by the origins of the movement that he renounced it, explaining his reasons in a *Confession* written in 1560. Nevertheless, it is important to establish that, at its inception, the movement was peaceful. This fact is confirmed by a number of contemporaries as well as by modern scholarship.

What was Menno's relationship to these movements? To answer the question properly, we must begin with an important observation: Menno's conversion is not to be confused with his theological development—believing a creed or a set

of theological propositions does not a Christian make! Because scholars have not distinguished between the two, there has been a great deal of confusion in regard to the question of Menno's relationship to the Muensterite movement.

Menno's theological transformation began in 1525, at least six years before he ever heard about "rebaptism," and nearly nine years before he came into contact with the Muensterites. In 1524 he was ordained and appointed priest in Pingjum, the village next to his father's farm. Only one year later, he began to have doubts about the Catholic teaching of the mass known as transubstantiation. Somewhere he had read, perhaps in a Lutheran tract, perhaps in one of Erasmus' writings, about the pre-eminent importance of the Bible in matters Christian. He began to read it, looking for passages dealing with the Lord's Supper. Not long into his quest he concluded that the church had deceived him in the matter. For further clarification he turned to the writings of the emerging Reformers, but found only disagreement. This forced him back to the Bible. Once begun, he did not stop studying the book of books.

In 1531 he heard of the execution of Sicke Freerks in Leeuwarden for rebaptism. Had Menno been educated in a monastery or a monastic school, the term would not have been so unfamiliar to him, for monks referred to the initiation into a monastic order as a "second baptism." But Freerks had been baptized upon his confession of faith as an adult, and that was unheard of. Again Menno consulted the Reformers, but again they differed in their justification for infant baptism. So Menno, once again, turned to the Bible, but could find none of the Reformers' views substantiated there. Again he felt betrayed by his church.

In 1532 Menno was transferred to the parish church in Witmarsum. He informs us that by this time he had "acquired considerable knowl-

edge of the Scriptures" and was considered an "evangelical preacher." One year later, believers baptism was introduced in his region; and in 1534 he encountered the first emissaries from Muenster.

By this time Menno had studied the Bible and the writings of Erasmus and the Reformers for nine years. He had been forced to find his own theological way through the confusing maze of Catholic, Reformation, Muensterite, and biblical teachings, a path he had embarked upon long before he encountered the Muensterites. If he had not fallen prey to any of the much more theologically sophisticated arguments of the Reformers, why should he now have fallen prey to the much cruder arguments of the Muensterites? To assume that he did so without any proof at all is absurd, yet many have done so.

Menno now began to encounter the Muensterite emissaries in Witmarsum. He opposed them, debated them privately and publicly, and easily refuted their views. Though they erred in doctrine, he recognized their zeal. In January 1535 the disciples of Jan Matthys and Jan of Leiden sought to capture Amsterdam as well; in March they took over the monastery in nearby Bolsward. In the latter place the authorities captured and massacred the rebels, Menno's brother Pieter among them.

Probably immediately after his brother's execution, Menno took up his pen for the first time and attacked Jan of Leiden in a tract entitled *Against the Blasphemy of Jan of Leiden*. Written in anger, it was a frontal attack on the king of the New Jerusalem. Menno never wrote another piece like it, nor did he ever publish it. It was later discovered among his daughter's papers after her death and first published in 1627. Since it speaks of Jan of Leiden as still alive, it must have been written between Easter of 1535 and the collapse of Muenster in June of the same year. In the tract,



Menno attacks Leiden as a "false prophet" who had subverted the movement from within; he addressed it to all "true brethren of the covenant scattered abroad." It was the nature of such false prophets, Menno asserted, to "desert the pure doctrine of Christ and begin to traffic in strange doctrine." His purpose, apparently, was to call the movement back to its more orthodox beginnings.

Before Menno could publish the tract, Muenster must have fallen. Should he still publish it and appear to be celebrating on the graves of his enemies? Perhaps there was another reason for not publishing the tract. In his brief autobiography, Menno describes himself during this period in which he debated the Muensterites—as a hypocrite. The reason for this, he informs us, was that he knew what was right—he had his biblical theology in order—and he knew how the "erring sheep" could be helped; but for his ease and convenience he chose to remain in the Catholic Church and let the "misguided sheep" go to their doom.

When his poor brother was killed, he picked up his pen and—both out of guilt and anger—attacked Jan of Leiden who was responsible for the disaster. But as he did so—or shortly after he had done so—the words of Christ as recorded in Matthew 7 about the splinter in the "brother's" eye and the "mote" or beam in his own eye came back to haunt him. Here he was, Menno Simons, denouncing his "brother" who certainly had a splinter in his eye, while his own conscience was punishing him for his own hypocrisy. Was he not, therefore, at least as damned in the eyes of God as any Jan of Leiden, who may have acted in ignorance?

Confronted by the realization of who he really was, Menno broke down before God, repented his sins, and received a new heart from God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Now he knew that theological knowledge of itself provided no

power; it led only to arrogance and strife with those who disagree with you. It had not made him a Christian, for he had continued his old lifestyle unabated. Will as well as mind had to be transformed and brought into subjection to God; conversion had to be added to correct theological knowledge; life had to be brought into conformity with faith. And so Menno placed his *Blasphemy* in a "drawer," even though the tract could have exonerated him forever had he published it at the time. Rather than do so, however, a reformed Menno chose to divest himself of his honorable position in society and associate himself with the most despised of all 16th-century persons—the hated Muensterites.

If Menno was never a Muensterite, could he have belonged to the peaceful Melchiorites? Most recent scholars, both Mennonite and non-Mennonite, have answered in the affirmative, primarily because of Menno's doctrine of the incarnation. Now it is interesting that virtually every time Menno seeks to refute the charge of being a Muensterite he mentions very specific aspects of their teachings that he had opposed from the time he first encountered them. Never once, however, does he mention their views on the incarnation. Was this because he agreed with them on the issue, or because he had not heard of them before the collapse of the movement? Most historians, myself included, assumed the former. But I no longer believe this to be the case. For there exists, in Menno's *A True Confession and Scriptural Demonstration of the Most Holy Incarnation*, the following passage:

*... when the matter of the incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ was first mentioned by the brethren, on hearing it I was terrified at heart, lest I should err in the matter and be found, before God, in pernicious unbelief. On account of this article I was often so troubled at heart, after receiving baptism, that for many days I abstained*

*from food and drink, by the overanxiety of my soul, beseeching and praying God in extreme necessity that the kind Father by his mercy and grace would disclose unto me, poor sinner, who, although in extreme weakness, desired to do his blessed will and pleasure, the mystery of the incarnation of his blessed Son, to the extent necessary to the glorification of his holy name to the consolation of my afflicted conscience."*

This passage makes clear that Menno first heard of the doctrine directly from "the brethren"—the reference must be to Dirk and Obbe Philips and their followers. Such a first meeting took place only well after the collapse of Muenster. More importantly, however, Menno speaks of hearing of the doctrine in connection with his baptism—probably in January 1536. Perhaps, it was only after his baptism! For, would he have allowed himself to be baptized by them had they informed him about these views beforehand? Hardly. But if he only heard of it afterwards Menno would have been placed into a nearly impossible position. Once performed, he could not go back on his baptism; and yet he could not accept the doctrine of the "heavenly flesh" of Christ either.

If the above is correct, it says something extremely important about Menno's relationship to the peaceful Melchiorites—and that is: had he been theologically influenced by them prior to his baptism he must surely have heard about this doctrine, for it was widely known, even that the Muensterites shared it. I therefore believe it safe to conclude that both in his theological development as well as in his conversion, Menno owed essentially nothing to the Muensterites or the Melchiorites save the occasion or reason for his theological inquiries.

If this is so, however, it poses a problem of character for Menno. Should Menno have allowed himself to be persuaded in the matter of the incarnation by his new brethren,



apparently against his better judgment? Should he have allowed the "brotherhood"—to put it into a contemporary context—to have determined his interpretation? Or should he not rather have played the prophet and "corrected" his brothers, in the process vindicating his conscience?

Menno did the same thing later with respect to the implementation of the ban, succumbing to the "harsh banners" against his better judgment. No wonder that every time he addresses the topic of the incarnation in his writings one gets the distinct impression that Menno is defensive. This was noted already by the great church historian, Johann Lorenz Mosheim, in the first half of the eighteenth-century. He argued further that Menno, on occasion, even described the incarnation in orthodox terms! And Mosheim was no friend of the Anabaptists.

Within a few years of the collapse of the revolutionary movement in 1535, a powerful transformation began to manifest itself in Dutch Anabaptism. Mosheim may have been the first "outsider" to acknowledge it. He credited it primarily to Menno's eloquence and moral integrity. But would that have been enough to account for a transformation that even Johan Huizinga, the great twentieth-century Dutch cultural historian and descendant of Anabaptist forebears, pointed to in the following question:

*How is it that a religion whose zealots were responsible for fanatical excesses in Amsterdam and Muenster should have subsided so gently into decorous piety, and that the many disciples of Menno in the northern provinces, in Haarlem and in Amsterdam, became the most peaceful citizens of all?*

How indeed! The question has never been satisfactorily answered. Certainly, the discredited Muensterite movement could not have provided the power for it. Could Melchioritism? Or had it, too,

been compromised by its association with the revolutionary forces?

We have observed that Obbe and Dirk Philips, who formed the center of the peaceful Melchiorite movement, sought out Menno after his conversion and both baptized and ordained him after January 1536. But within a few short years—in 1540—Obbe had left the movement because, as he wrote in his *Confession* of 1560, he felt compromised by the revolutionary involvement of the Muensterite leaders from whom he had received baptism and ordination.

How could such a movement—filled with inner doubt and external turmoil—have provided both the theology and inner strength to transform a movement which had been derailed by its own internal problems? Was the failure of the revolutionary wing enough to bring about such a change? The answer would appear to be negative. It was Menno who provided both the requisite theology and the source of strength; and neither the one nor the other derived from Melchioritism.

The power came from Menno's own conversion and his theology of conversion that resulted from it. His conversion has been described above; as early as 1536 he wrote his "The Spiritual Resurrection." There, in the opening lines, he wrote:

*The Scriptures teach two resurrections, namely a bodily resurrection from the dead at the last day, and a spiritual resurrection from sin and death to a new life and a change of heart.*

*That a man should mortify and bury the body of sin and rise again to a new life of righteousness in God is plainly taught in all the Scriptures.*

In 1537 Menno revisited the topic in his *The New Birth*. From the very outset of the piece it was clear that Menno was talking not only of a moral reformation, but of a moral revolution, for he wrote:

*Tell me, dearly beloved, where and when did you read in the Scriptures, the true witness of the Holy Ghost and criterion of your consciences, that the unbelieving, disobedient, carnal man, the adulterous, immoral, drunken, avaricious, idolatrous, and pompous man has one single promise of the kingdom of Christ and His church, yes, part or communion in His merits, death and blood? I tell you the truth, nowhere and never do we read it in the Scriptures.*

From the start, Menno's message was: you must be born again. Neither Hoffmann's teachings nor the "revolution of the saints" had changed the essential nature of man. Instead, their teachings had brought only disaster.

But this doctrine of the new birth, of regeneration through the power of the Holy Spirit, had a larger theological context. And that theological context came to Menno from the same source the Swiss and South German Anabaptists had received it—from Erasmus' *Paraphrases of the Gospel of Matthew and the Acts of the Apostles*—more particularly, from Erasmus' interpretation of Matthew 28:18-20—Christ's great commission. This becomes apparent in Menno's writings as early as 1539 in his immensely influential "Fundamentboek." There Menno wrote:

*Christ commanded his disciples after his resurrection, saying: "Therefore go and teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and teach them to observe everything that I have commanded you. For, behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the earth."*

*Here we have the Lord's command regarding baptism, who shall receive God's ordinance, and when and what it is to serve; that is that the Gospel must first be preached and then baptize those who [accept and] believe it, as he [Christ] says: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all cre-*



ation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

Somewhat later Menno continued:

*Christ's holy apostles taught and practiced [baptism] in accordance with Christ's commandments, as one can readily understand and note from the many passages of the New Testament. Thus Peter says: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." And Philip said to the eunuch: "If you believe with all your heart, you may be [baptized]." Acts chapter 8. For faith does not follow upon baptism, but baptism follows from faith (Matt. 28, Mark 16).*

What is striking about this passage is that Menno interprets the great commission through the baptismal passages in the Acts the Apostles, in particular through Peter's Pentecost sermon. In an earlier essay, we pointed out that such an interpretation, to be found throughout Swiss, South German, and Hutterite Anabaptism, could only have come from Erasmus' *Paraphrases of the Gospel of Matthew and the Acts of the Apostles*. It was this Erasmian context that gave the theological meaning to Menno's own conversion.

Thus, as we have seen, Peter's Pentecost sermon became the grid through which the great commission was interpreted by the Anabaptists. In that sermon Peter began by proclaiming Jesus as the risen Christ and confronting the Jews—and others—with the Son of God whom they had crucified. He went on to demonstrate that his coming had been foretold in the Old Testament, and that he was now seated at the right hand of God the Father and would come again to judge the quick and the dead.

With the Holy Spirit visibly present—without his presence there can be neither true repentance nor


conversion—the listeners were stricken in their consciences; they recognized whom they had crucified and that, at their death, he would sit in judgment of them. Seeing no escape from sure condemnation by the living God, they cried out to Peter and the other apostles: "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter told them: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Those who accepted Peter's message, we are informed, "were baptized, and about 3,000 were added to their number that day."

After the first "teaching," repentance, and baptism, the Matthean account of the great commission had then added: "teach them [who have been baptized] to obey everything I have commanded you." And in Acts 2 we read that those who had been baptized and added to the church "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Only two weeks ago I heard an Evangelical preacher proclaim that these apostolic teachings must have dealt with Christ. Anabaptists—and Menno—would have rejected that assertion.

The "apostolic teachings" the newly baptized converts devoted themselves to were all those things Christ had commanded his disciples to obey! This was the place where discipleship was taught. And the context makes it clear that such discipleship was possible only if the persons involved had heard and accepted the crucified and risen Christ as Savior, had repented their sins, and had had their heart changed—that is, had been raised to newness of life—and had taken an oath of obedience to Christ in baptism. For that baptism symbolized the fact that they had already died to self, sin, and the world, and had been raised to newness of life. Only then could Christ's second command to "teach" be meaningful.

Now, if with the above firmly in

one's mind one begins to read the *Martyrs Mirror*, one cannot help but be struck by how widespread—from ministers to the commonest brother and sister—this interpretation had penetrated to the very core of Dutch Anabaptism. And what transformed this theological interpretation into vibrant life was Menno's all-pervasive emphasis on conversion. It was this message, so graphically portrayed in Menno's earliest writings, and the conversions that followed from it, that transformed the revolutionary Muensterites, as well as the more peaceful Melchiorites, into peaceful Mennonites, just as his own conversion transformed Menno's life. And the *Martyrs Mirror* is filled with the evidence.

Both Menno, therefore, as well as Dutch Anabaptism after Muenster, were neither Muensterite nor Melchiorite. The theological core came from the outside—from Erasmus' interpretation of Christ's great commission—but it was given life by Menno's own conversion experience. To be sure, the Melchiorite doctrine of the incarnation hung around for some time to come, but the framework of Dutch Anabaptist theology came from Erasmus, as it had for Swiss and South German Anabaptism. Hence the overwhelming similarities between the two movements despite the fact that there were virtually no initial contacts between the two, and Menno never once mentioned, in his writings, the names of any of the early Swiss Brethren. 

—Abraham Friesen is professor of history at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and chair of the the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission.



# Menno Answers His Critics on the Issue of Peace and Violence

*... they say that we are seditionists and that we would take cities and countries if we had the power.*

This prophecy is false and will ever remain so; and by the grace of God, time and experience will prove that those who thus prophesy according to the Word of Moses are not of God. Faithful reader, understand what I write.

The Scriptures teach that there are two opposing princes and two opposing kingdoms: the one is the Prince of peace; the other the prince of strife. Each of these princes has his particular kingdom and as the prince is so is also the kingdom. The Prince of peace is Christ Jesus; His kingdom is the kingdom of peace, which is His church; His messengers are the messengers of peace; His Word is the word of peace; His body is the body of peace; His children are the seed of peace; and His inheritance and reward are the inheritance and reward of peace. In short, with this King, and in His kingdom and reign, it is nothing but peace. Everything that is seen, heard, and done is peace.

We have heard the word of peace, namely, the consoling Gospel of peace from the mouth of His messengers of peace. We, by His grace, have believed and accepted it in peace and have committed ourselves to the only, eternal, and true Prince of peace, Christ Jesus, in His kingdom of peace and under His reign, and are thus by the gift of His Holy Spirit, by means of faith, incorporated into His body. And henceforth we look with all the children of His peace for the promised inheritance and reward of peace.

Such exceeding grace of God has appeared unto us poor, miserable

sinner that we who were formerly no people at all and who knew of no peace are now called to be such a glorious people of God, a church, kingdom, inheritance, body, and possession of peace. Therefore we desire not to break this peace, but by His great power by which He has called us to this peace and portion, to walk in this grace and peace, unchangeably and unwaveringly unto death.

Peter was commanded to sheathe his sword. All Christians are commanded to love their enemies; to do good unto those who abuse and persecute them; to give the mantle when the cloak is taken, the other cheek when one is struck. Tell me, how can a Christian defend scripturally retaliation, rebellion, war, striking, slaying, torturing, stealing, robbing and plundering and burning cities, and conquering countries?

The great Lord who has created you and us, who has placed our hearts within us knows, and He only knows that our hearts and hands are clear of all sedition and murderous mutiny. By His grace we will ever remain clear. For we truly confess that all rebellion is of the flesh and of the devil.

O beloved reader, our weapons are not swords and spears, but patience, silence, and hope, and the Word of God. With these we must maintain our heavy warfare and fight our battle. Paul says, The weapons of our warfare are not carnal; but mighty through God. . . .

True Christians do not know vengeance, no matter how they are mistreated. In patience they possess their souls. Luke 21:18. And they do not break their peace, even if they should be tempted by bondage, torture, poverty, and besides, by the

sword and fire. They do not cry, Vengeance, vengeance, as does the world; but with Christ they supplicate and pray: Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60.

According to the declaration of the prophets they have beaten their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, Christ; neither shall they learn war any more. Isa. 2:4; Mic 4:3.

They do not seek your money, goods, injury, nor blood, but they seek the honor and praise of God and the salvation of your souls. They are the children of peace; their hearts overflow with peace; their mouths speak peace, and they walk in the way of peace; they are full of peace. They seek, desire, and know nothing but peace; and are prepared to forsake country, goods, life, and all for the sake of peace. For they are the kingdom, people, congregation, city, property, and body of peace, as has been heard.

Beloved reader, I poor, miserable man, pardon me for writing this, have in my weakness these seventeen years feared the Word of the Lord and served my neighbors. I have without faltering borne scorn and cross with much misery, anxiety, tribulation, and peril. I trust by His grace that I will do so to the end, to testify with a good conscience to His holy Word, will, and ordinance with mouth, pen, life, and death as much as in me is. Is it possible that at heart I am a stormy, rebellious, vengeful, and bloody murderer? The Most High will save His poor servant from that. *M*

—Reply to Gellius Faber, 1552, *Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, pp. 554-556.



## News and Notes

A conference for congregational and conference historians, pastors and students of history is being planned for May 9-10, 1997, in Harrisonburg, Va. Titled *The Riddle of Things Past* (Ps. 78:2 NEB), the conference will feature John L. Ruth, Harleysville, Pa., as the keynote speaker, along with a variety of workshops. The purpose of the gathering is to motivate participants to pay attention to the church's heritage, and to train congregational historians. The conference is being sponsored by the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians, the Virginia Conference Historical Society, and the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church, and will be hosted by Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

A literal piece of history has returned to **Eastern Mennonite University** with a new look. A massive oak desk built in 1941 for use in the school library in the north wing of the former administration building was refinished and installed as a reference desk in EMU's Hartzler Library. Harold Eshleman, a veteran pastor, schoolteacher, and avid woodworker from Harrisonburg who did the refinishing, said it took about 50 hours and five coats of lacquer finish to complete the task. "It was the library staff's idea to have the desk redone and placed in the main area," said Lehman. "It provides a lot of room and flexibility for the reference librarian and his assistants. I'm sure the creators of the desk in 1941 had no idea what computerization is or that this desk would ever find that kind of use."

The desk, reportedly used by J. B. Smith, president of the former Eastern Mennonite School, to register the first students to enroll in 1917, is housed in the Menno Simons Historical Library on third floor of EMU's Hartzler Library.

On May 6, the **Center for Brethren in Christ Studies** sponsored two presentations on Pietism by Dale Brown, Church of the Brethren theologian-historian. The event was held at Messiah College. The presentations were entitled "Piety, Pietism, and Pedagogy," and "The Theology of Love in Pietism, Anabaptism, and the Brethren in Christ." Brown's revised edition of *Understanding Pietism* (reprinted by Evangel Press) was also released at this conference.

On Saturday, June 15, the descendants of the River Brethren—the Brethren in Christ, the United Zion Church, and the Old Order River Brethren—will meet for fellowship, in similar fashion to an earlier meeting in 1993.

The meeting is sponsored by the Brethren in Christ Historical Society. The program includes a tour in the afternoon of the historic sites of the three groups, followed by a fellowship meal and evening program at the farm of Old Order River Brethren member Samuel Conley near Salunga, Pennsylvania.

For more information write to the Brethren in Christ Historical Society, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027.

At the annual meeting of the **Mennonite Historical Society of Canada**, held December 2, 1995, Abe Dueck, director of the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, reported that Canadian Mennonites doing historical research in states of the former Soviet Union have identified several significant collections of Mennonite documents, previously unknown to Western researchers. These include files hitherto presumed lost from the highly publicized Braun archive, several eighteenth- and nineteenth-century censuses of Mennonites in the Chortitza colony, and records of Mennonite kulaks in the 1930s.

The Society also decided to create a **Central Registry of microfilmed**

**or copied Mennonite archival records in Eastern Europe and states of the former Soviet Union** in order to facilitate communication between scholars and researchers so that the interests of the scholarly community as a whole can best be served. All individuals doing archival research on Russian Mennonites in Eastern Europe and states of the former Soviet Union are strongly encouraged to submit reports with as much detail as possible to Abe Dueck and Bert Friesen, Archives Committee, Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, 169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5, who will send out an annual or semiannual newsletter which summarizes the information received.

A major **North American Mennonite history conference** is planned to celebrate the completion of the *Mennonites in Canada* history series and the United States *Mennonite Experience in America* history series. It will be held in western Canada, probably on the Pacific Coast, in fall 1997. The conference will focus on what is common as well as distinct between Mennonite experiences in Canada and the United States and examine possible integrative or collaborative ideas and agenda. Mennonite Historical Society of Canada members on the planning committee are Dr. Roy Loewen and Dr. Reg Good (cochair).

**J. C. Wenger's influential systematic theology book, *Introduction to Theology*, is again in print.** This book sets forth systematically the teachings of the Word of God so its collected teachings on any one subject are together.

This book throughout the years has been valuable to the scholars, but one does not have to be a scholar to read it. Its language is not technical, its style is easy and pleasing. This book will be a blessing to any Bible reader.



The footnotes of this volume tell something about the author's background and method. He shows his familiarity with and indebtedness to great theological writers and the Anabaptist Mennonite brethren. But most of the references are to the Bible. This is a biblical theology. The chief assumption of the author is that the clear teaching of the Word of God must determine what we believe.

This hard cover book has a suggested selling price of \$15.00 and is available from the publisher: Leland M. Haines, 16416 Sutters Lane Court, Northville, MI 48167, 810-348-2645.

The eighth annual award from the **Frank H. Epp Memorial Fund** has been awarded to Terrance M. Rempel of Tofield, Alberta. Rempel was awarded \$2,500 in support for his studies in Middle Eastern Politics—Jerusalem Studies at the University of Exeter, England. Rempel proposes to examine the contemporary history of Jerusalem within the context of a nonviolent Anabaptist framework.

The original vision for the **Mennonite Experience in America (MEA) book series**, personal reflections by an author, and how well the books included women and their contribution were key themes at a one-day conference held on Saturday, January 20, at Elizabethtown College's Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups.

At the conference, Young Center Director Donald B. Kraybill noted that this year offered a special opportunity to hold the session, since three of the series' four authors are based in Elizabethtown:

- Theron F. Schlabach is Young Center Senior Fellow for 1995-96 and 1996-97.

- James C. Juhnke is a Center Fellow in residence for the present semester.

- Richard K. MacMaster was a Center Fellow during the summer of 1995, who is at present conducting research in Ireland.

The fourth author, Paul Toews of Fresno, California, is well-known by many scholars who frequently attend conferences which the Young Center sponsors and hosts.

The Mennonite Experience in America series is four books which weave together the histories of all Mennonite and Amish groups in the United States. Their authors have written them not only for Mennonite readers but also as paperback volumes for students and scholars in colleges, universities, and seminaries.

They offer something new in Mennonite and Amish history: an attempt to tell not only the inside story but also how one religious people, or set of peoples, has lived and developed along with the pluralism of the U.S. nation.

Available through bookstores or directly from Herald Press, Scottdale, PA 15683, three of the books are in print: They are:

MacMaster's *Land, Piety, and Peoplehood* (1985), covering times of colonial settlement and the American revolution;

Schlabach's *Peace, Faith, Nation* (1988), carrying the story through the nineteenth century;

and Juhnke's *Vision, Doctrine, War* (1989), covering the period from 1890 to 1930 by telling of rapid growth of institutions and denominational consciousness plus encounters with Protestant Fundamentalism and the difficulties that Mennonites faced as conscientious objectors in World War I.

Toew's book, the fourth and final one, called *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community*, will be released in the fall of 1996.

The authors have written the books not only for scholars but also to be very readable for all who want both the stories of history and some interpretation and analysis.

**Bluffton College, the Swiss Community Historical Society and ArtSpace Lima will sponsor an exhibition in summer 1996** featuring examples of the decorative arts made or used in the local 19th-century Swiss settlement and comparative material drawn from the Swiss communities in Wayne County, Ohio, and Berne, Indiana.

Exhibits in the Sauder Visual Arts Center and Marbeck Center galleries at Bluffton College will open June 27 and continue through September. The related exhibit at ArtSpace Lima will be open June 28-Aug. 16. The college also will host a symposium on Swiss Mennonite decorative arts in the social context June 28-29.

Fraktur (decorative German lettering), bookbinding, costumes, quilts and other textile artifacts, furniture and architecture (the last through photographs) will be displayed and interpreted in the exhibition.

The project will attempt to clarify which Swiss traditions in the arts were successfully transplanted to the settlements in Ohio and Indiana, what variations occurred across the communities, and what traits were common among them.

Although the exhibition is focused on 19th-century artifacts, some early 20th-century material will be included.

**The Springs Historical Society** of Springs, Pennsylvania, has recently published a 35-year index to its publication *The Casselman Chronicle*. The Chronicle is a journal which relates stories of early settlers and historical events of the Casselman Valley Area of Somerset County, Pennsylvania; Garrett County, Maryland; and areas of West Virginia. The cost of the index is \$6.00, plus \$1.25 postage. Checks may be made payable to Springs Historical Society, PO Box 62, Springs, PA 15562. Inquiries for back orders may also be sent to the same address.





*Photo: The Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church. Standing, left to right: Kimberly D. Schmidt, Nate Yoder, Hope K. Lind (secretary), Marcus Miller, Laurence Klippenstein (GC guest), John D. Thiesen (GC participant/observer), and John D. Roth. Seated, left to right: Arlin D. Lapp (chair), John E. Sharp (director) and Carolyn C. Wenger (vice-chair). Credit: Lorraine Sheeler.*

Integration was prominent on the agenda of the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church's meeting in Sarasota, Florida, April 12-13. Signaling its intentions to move toward integration with the General Conference, the committee recommended the appointment of two General Conference historians as

members. It issued a statement favoring decentralized, regional archival centers, and indicated its readiness to lead in the placement of official papers as institutional integration develops. Concern was raised, however, about the lack of consistent support by the GC General Board of its own Historical

Committee.

The committee also considered the possibility of converting its large archival holdings of 10-12 million pages to computer images in order to make research more efficient on site, and to provide access via the Internet. In other agenda, the committee heard reports on the Menno Simons commemorative fraktur project, discussed the need for continued creative fundraising, and reviewed plans for a 1997 conference for congregational and conference historians in Harrisonburg, Virginia. The committee also agreed to cosponsor a historical drama to be written by John L. Ruth, Harleysville, Pennsylvania, and began planning for Orlando 97, the Mennonite Church General Assembly. The Historical Committee's worship included new music written by James Clemens, entitled "The Prince of Peace: A Song Cycle on the Words of Menno Simons," sung by Lorraine Sheeler and Laura Spalding.

The Historical Committee is guided by its new mission statement: *God calls us to preserve our heritage, to interpret our story, and to proclaim God's work among us.*

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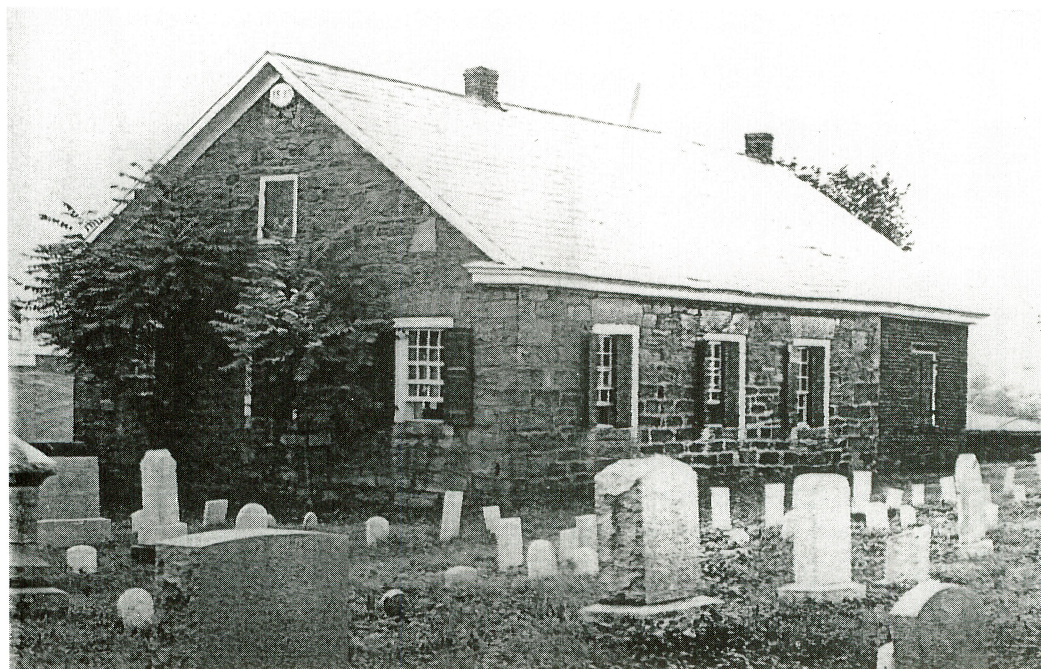
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*The Mennonite Meetinghouse at Harmony: "as long as the rain falls and grass is green."*

## Harmony Revisited


by Larry D. Rohrer

On May 5, 1996, a group of 35 members and friends of the Midway Mennonite Church joined with another 65 friends of Historic Harmony, Inc. to worship where no congregation has existed for 94 years. The setting for this remarkable gathering was the oldest Mennonite meetinghouse west of the Alleghenies. It is a stone and brick building that is being restored by local volunteers, many of whom are descendants of the original Mennonite settlers in the historic

community of Harmony in Butler County, Pennsylvania. The community, founded by the communal Harmony Society in 1804, was sold along with 9,000 acres of land in 1815 to Abraham Ziegler and "five brethren" from Lehigh County. Soon after, other families moved to the area, families with names like Musselman, Tinstman, Shantz, Wise, Rice, Herr, Moyer, Boyer, and Stouffer. A Mennonite meetinghouse was erected outside the village in 1825 and used for approximately 75 years. Thereafter, Mennonite descendants maintained the structure until 1977 when it was turned over to

Historic Harmony. Today the meetinghouse still stands, much in its original state, as a shrine to the memories of a congregation which for several reasons could not cope with the changes of the late 1800s. Eventually the congregation became extinct at the turn of the century. An extinct congregation, however, is not a forgotten congregation in this instance. Due to the efforts of Historic Harmony, there is new interest in the former Mennonite presence, including an ongoing interest among descendants who are two, three, or more generations removed from their Mennonite fore-



bears. Thus on a Sunday afternoon in early May, 100 people gathered in the old meetinghouse to remember, reflect, and worship much in the same manner as the people who first inhabited the building. Midway pastor Larry Rohrer provided a devotional message, historian Wilmer Swope offered some insight on how ministers of the congregation likely had been chosen, and retired Midway pastor Ernest Martin, a descendant of Abraham Ziegler, led the congregational singing including some in the German language. The local community graciously provided a fellowship dinner following the service. Will the Harmony Mennonite Meetinghouse stand for years to come as a memorial of what once was and what could have been? Or has it been divinely preserved as a reminder of lessons still to be learned and a hope not to be forgotten? Perhaps within its old walls, the echo will someday be heard inviting the Mennonites to return, for in the stone of the building is engraved a phrase reading, "This property and land shall belong to the Mennonite Society as long as the rain falls and grass is green." 

—Larry Rohrer is pastor of Midway Mennonite Church in Columbiana, Ohio.

## I Wish I'd Been There

The consulting editors of the Mennonite Historical Bulletin respond to the question: What is the one event in Anabaptist-Mennonite history you wish you could have witnessed—and Why?

### My Mother and the One-armed Preacher

by Russell Krabill

I wish I had been at the Sugar Creek Mennonite Church in Wayland, Iowa, when the one-armed preacher from Kansas preached. That was almost 100 years ago—about 20 years before I was born. My mother was 10 or 12 years of age, but she never forgot the experience.

The preacher was Joseph F. Brunk (1865-1943). Joseph's father, Henry G. Brunk, was a native of Virginia. During the Civil War, to escape military service, he left Virginia and moved to Illinois, where he and his family remained until they moved to Marion, Kansas, in 1873. Eight days after arriving on the plains of Kansas, Henry died of typhoid fever, at the age of 37, leaving his wife and seven children.



Joseph F. Brunk, 1865-1943, the impressive, one-armed preacher.  
Credit: Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Eight-year-old Joseph F. was one of those children. His younger brother, George R., was two years old. The family later moved to McPherson County, Kansas, where Joseph grew to manhood.

Young Joseph "worked out" to help his family survive. When he was 12 years old, his hand was caught between the rollers of a cane

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mill, and his arm had to be amputated below the elbow. However, he continued to help his widowed mother with the farmwork.

After his marriage to Marietta R. Gray in 1888, Joseph farmed until 1903 when he became superintendent of the Orphan's Home near Hillsboro, Kansas. From there he and his wife moved to Kansas City to help organize the Mennonite Mission. He served as superintendent of the Kansas City Mission for a number of years. In 1905 he was ordained to the ministry by Daniel Kauffman.

Brunk was a pioneer. He assisted in establishing the Mennonite Sanitarium near La Junta, Colorado. A few years later, he had charge of the Old People's Home near Rittman, Ohio. He also helped start a mission in Hutchinson, Kansas. Then for a number of years, he served as pastor of the Catlin Mennonite Church. In 1936 he and his wife retired at Newton, Kansas, where he died in 1943.

Brunk did considerable traveling, promoting, and preaching. One of his trips took him to Wayland, Iowa, my mother's home community, in 1897 or 1898. It had been announced that Joseph F. Brunk would be coming to the Sugar Creek Mennonite Church on a certain evening and that he would preach in English. My mother had never heard an English sermon. She was thrilled when her father decided to take the family. My mother was Mary Ann, the oldest daughter of Ella and C. H. Roth. She had three younger siblings: Jesse, Lena, and Seth. The family was loaded into the spring wagon and transported the several miles in the gathering darkness to the new meetinghouse, which had been built in 1891.

Evening meetings were not common. The building had no electricity. It was dimly lit with kerosene lamps. The poor lighting and the flickering shadows produced an eerie effect. This was the first evening service Mary Ann had ever attended.

The speaker was impressive. Joseph Brunk was a large man with a booming voice. And to make him more impressive, he had only one arm. That night he preached on the second coming of Christ, and my mother came under conviction.

Several years later, in July of 1904, at the age of 16, she was baptized by Sebastian Gerig, her great uncle, in the same 1891 meeting-house where she had heard the one-armed preacher.

—Russell Krabill is a retired pastor and founding chair of the Michiana Anabaptist Historians.

## Menno "Doing Church"

by Leonard Gross

The human dimension of "doing church" can take on utmost significance when differing opinions come into conflict—at times, clashing through to schism; at other times, finding resolution through a deeper meeting of the minds. In the 16th century, the Concept of Cologne (1591) was a rare example of the lat-



*What were the human dynamics behind Menno's drastic measure of banning "all the high Germans and their followers"?*

*Credit: Charly et Carire-Lise Ummel, L'Eglise Anabaptiste en Pays Neuchâtelois, Société Suisse D'Histoire Mennonite, 1994.*

ter, with the meeting of the minds and wills resulting in reconciliation and church unity among several Swiss and Dutch Mennonite groups.

One of the many examples of the former was when Menno Simons, in the latter 1550s, banned "all the 'High Germans' [i.e., the Swiss Brethren] and their followers." If we could only capture the human dynamics behind this drastic measure! Menno Simons and cohorts, to be sure, differed from the Swiss Brethren on a number of issues, including the nature of Christ's incarnation, and the use of the ban and excommunication.

I would like to have been with the two Swiss Brethren leaders, Zelis and Lemke, in 1556 through 1559—looking over their shoulders as they penned their communications to Menno Simons, to see from their perspective the nature of the conflict. I would like to have been at the Strasbourg Anabaptist Conference of 1557, where some of these same ideas were discussed. I would like to have been there when Menno met with Zelis and Lemke during this time. I would most of all like to have been privy to Menno's mind, to see exactly how he could justify his written response and formal banning, which Dirk Philips and Leenaert Bouwens then delivered in person to the Swiss Brethren in 1559.

What possessed Menno Simons to have even dared to assume the authority of pronouncing the ban on an older Anabaptist group, the Swiss Brethren? The Swiss Brethren on their side would never have dared to pronounce such on the Dutch Mennonites; such a reaction did not lie in their character! Why, then, the Dutch reaction, and why the seeming Swiss response of life as usual, such a ban notwithstanding? Equally important, could it be that both sides were somehow right—that Menno was attempting to resolve conflict in his Low Country setting, just as the Swiss Brethren were attempting to take care of their Upper German situation, each with its own unique cultural context and



tradition?

To have experienced Anabaptism in the 1550s would have been most instructive, providing insights into knowing how best to respond to those many parallel clashes of minds and wills that have inundated the Anabaptist-Mennonite scene ever since.

—Leonard Gross is consulting archivist at the Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

# Joseph Summers' Travel Stories

by Levi Miller

This wish, as you will soon see, dear reader, has parts of myself written all over it. My only defense against overindulgent self-love, and gross narcissism is that my subject was humble. Joseph Summers (1823-1892) stayed solely in the 19th century and has no entry in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*. I can think of few better grounds for proper humility, and I think Theron Schlabach would say so too.

Yet I wish I could have heard Joseph Summers' travel stories. The only story I have comes from his obituary written by John F. Funk, the Mennonite publisher, which is a nice story of his life as a teacher, farmer, '49er, mission board treasurer, editor, and "faithful and devoted Christian." The obituary appeared in the September 15, 1892, *Herald of Truth*, (I was born on September 15, 1944), and was reprinted in the April 1951 issue of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*.



Uncle Joe Summers: gold prospector and editor. His stories "afforded many an hour's profitable entertainment."

Credit: Phoebe Mumaw Kolb Photograph Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Joseph Summers was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, married Barbara Souders when he was age 24 (and I married Gloria Miller at age 24). He moved to Holmes County, Ohio, (that's where I was born), where he took up farming and teaching near Millersburg (that was my goal too).

However, such a life was not to be for Joseph (nor for me). Not long after marriage, he formed the Zanesville Mining Company, and in 1850, he joined the '49ers in the California Gold Rush. The Holmes County miners left home in teams and wagons, but as Funk said, much of the journey was "performed on foot and through country inhabited by the Indian and the buffalo." (Soon after marriage, Gloria and I left for Puerto Rico . . . all right, I'll stop this, gentle reader, but you *do* catch the connections.)

It took the Holmes County '49ers about 10 months to arrive at Dry Town, California. After two months and finding no gold, Summers was on his way back to Ohio—this time by boat from San Francisco. He spent several months in Trinidad and stopped in Panama, San Juan (I'll resist making any personal references here.), Havana, and New Orleans. Finally, after about a year en route and "many privations and

hardships," he reached home in Holmes County in December of 1851.

Two years later, Joseph Summers was on his way back to California. This time he stayed six years. Whether he found gold or not, we do not know. Nor do we know what Barbara made of all these trips. What we do know is that he had many anecdotes and "valuable lessons" from these journeys, and Funk said that his observations "afforded many an hour's profitable entertainment."

In 1870, Summers joined Funk's Mennonite Publishing Company in Elkhart. (In 1970, I headed for Mennonite Publishing House at Scottsdale.) Joseph spent the rest of his life as a proofreader and editor of *Words of Cheer*, the paper for youth.

Funk said that Joseph was punctual—actually clock-like—in his reliability. His fellow workers liked him, and toward the end of his life they gave him a fine office chair. He was also popular with his readers. The young people who read his magazine called him "Uncle Joseph."

Joseph Summers was a minor player on the Mennonite stage, taking his exit as a "faithful helper in every work to promote the cause of Christ and his church." I could wish such a line for myself when my final bows come. Still, I wish I could have heard his travel stories of "profitable entertainment." I might also benefit from hearing Barbara's edition of those stories. *L*

—Levi Miller is past editor of the Mennonite Historical Bulletin, and is currently director of the Congregational Literature Division, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottsdale, Pa.



# Amish Anabaptists in Switzerland in 1861:

## Ch. Aug. Ramseyer's Letter to Shem Zook, February 1, 1861 As copied by Bishop Jacob Swartzendruber in 1862

**Translated and Edited  
by Leonard Gross and  
Paton Yoder**

### Introduction

This letter, written when the Amish in America were in the process of schism and their counterparts in Switzerland and contiguous lands were already showing signs of disintegration, has significance for both geographic settings.

The writer of this letter, Ch. Aug. Ramseyer, identifies himself as the leader ("Lehrer") of a small flock of Amish Anabaptists in Switzerland who had separated from other congregations with Amish roots. But we know that at the time of his death in 1895, he was a Baptist. Evidently his little group had left him, and being theologically minded, he had joined the growing Baptist denomination.<sup>1</sup> His history of the Baptists, *Histoire des Baptistes* (Neuchâtel, 1897), was published two years after his death.<sup>2</sup>

The letter is addressed to Shem Zook, who lived in Mifflin County, Pa., and is clearly a response to a letter Ramseyer had received from Zook in which the latter had made some inquiries about Amish and Mennonite beliefs and practices in Europe, particularly in Switzerland.

That Zook, a layman, should make inquiry of an Amish minister in Switzerland about Anabaptist church affairs in that country is unusual and surprising. But Shem Zook was no ordinary Amishman.

Quite certainly he was the best known Amish layman of his century. It seems he gave equal attention to his business activities and to his church-related interests.<sup>3</sup>

At the time that this exchange of letters was taking place, Zook and the bishop of his congregation, Solomon K. Beiler, were deeply involved in those controversies which were coming to a head within the ministry of the Amish church. Before the end of the year 1861, both Zook and his bishop would become involved, with others, in proposing and planning for the introduction of annual Amish ministers' conferences. It was hoped that these Amish ministers, in conference, could restore harmony in the church. Such conferences were initiated in 1862, but failed to restore unity.

Although we do not have Zook's letter of inquiry, the questions which Zook asked of Ramseyer can be ascertained by the latter's methodical answers. Most of Zook's questions revolved around the condition of Mennonite and Amish churches in Switzerland, a number of which related to the issues which were rending the Amish church in America. Zook wondered whether the Anabaptists in Switzerland were strict or lenient in their administration of church discipline, especially in the matter of shunning.

Zook had evidently also asked some detailed questions about the way Swiss Anabaptists baptized, particularly as to whether they baptized in flowing water. Given Zook's preoccupation with this ritu-

al and the details of its administration by Amish bishops, his inquiry is not surprising. Already by 1850 Zook and his bishop had come to regard the traditional Amish pattern of baptizing in the house or barn—where church services were normally held—as unscriptural. They proposed to take applicants to a stream and baptize them while kneeling therein.<sup>4</sup>

Of theological significance as well is Ramseyer's view that written confessions of faith, although useful, take second place to Scripture, the sole "binding principle" for faith and conduct.

Also of import is the author's observation that although nonresistance was still a tenet of faith among the traditional Swiss Anabaptist groups, the Dutch and French Anabaptists had forsaken this tenet to a considerable degree.

Finally, Ramseyer's analysis of the various Swiss Anabaptist groups, although certainly not complete, still contains useful information on the nature of the Swiss Anabaptist groups in the year 1861.

### Concerning the Authenticity of this Manuscript

As the caption of this document indicates, it is a copy of an original and is therefore subject to the same critical scrutiny normally given to any copy. According to the note on the envelope in which it was kept, this copy was made by Jacob Swartzendruber in 1862.

How the original letter got into the hands of Jacob Swartzendruber, first Amish bishop in Johnson



County, Iowa, is explained by Shem Zook's note, appended by Swartzendruber, to Ramseyer's letter. According to that note, Zook sent Ramseyer's letter westward to several Amish bishops and ministers in Ohio and Iowa, asking each one to send it on to still another. The last named to receive it was Jacob Swartzendruber (1800-1868), of Johnson County, Iowa. Already a minister, he had moved from Somerset County, Pa., to Johnson County, Iowa, in 1851. Only two years later he was ordained to the office of bishop. Possibly Swartzendruber was not comfortable with keeping such an important letter, and so copied it and returned the original to Zook, or perhaps he sent it on to still another minister.

The strongest reason for accepting the authenticity and accuracy of this copy is the integrity of Bishop Swartzendruber. But there is also internal evidence that this document is a careful copy of a lost original. The German script which is used in this copy is written in very small characters, on lined paper, with two lines of script between the lines, a practice which Swartzendruber sometimes followed in copying other documents. Equally significant is the fact that Zook's questions to Ramseyer (as rephrased by Ramseyer in his answers) are precisely what one would expect Zook to be asking in 1861, in the heat of the Great Schism then in progress in the Amish church in America. Similarly, it seems that Ramseyer's responses could only be those of a knowledgeable Swiss Anabaptist.

This copy of a 1861 letter to Shem Zook was found among a collection of Swartzendruber Family Papers given to the Archives of the Mennonite Church by Sanford Swartzendruber in August 1979. They were accessioned and added to the Daniel B. Swartzendruber Collection in March 1980 (Box 3, Folder 11). These dates will explain to the researcher why John Umble, who cataloged Bishop Jacob Swartzendruber's "library" in 1946 did not include it in his listing,<sup>5</sup> and also why Joe Springer did not make a typescript of it in the early 1970s when he was examining and copy-

ing parts of this collection. Only when Steven Reschly recently examined the Swartzendruber Collection was this letter brought to the attention of researchers.

### **Translation of Ch. Aug. Ramseyer's letter from Switzerland To Shem Zook, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, February 1, 1861**

*Written on the envelope in which this copy of Ramseyer's letter was enclosed is the following:*

Copy [of] a letter written by Ch. Aug. Ramseyer from Bern, Switzerland, to S[h]em Zook, Mifflin Co., Pa. Dated the 1st of Feb. 1861. Copied by Jacob Swartzendruber, 1862.<sup>6</sup> It would more correctly be called a Confession of Faith.<sup>7</sup>

### **Bern, Switzerland, February 1, 1861**

Grace and peace be with you, dear friend and brother Shem Zook, and with all those in that land who, I hope, with you as with me, genuinely love the Lord Jesus Christ, even if in other respects you may be stricter or more lenient, rough or gentle, as has been mentioned.

I have received your letter of the 21st of the past September and based on the assumption that it stems from a heart, inquiring in [the spirit of] love toward the Lord and toward the brethren on this side of the ocean, I do not delay answering your questions insofar as I am presently able.

Concerning the first question, whether I am a preacher of the so-called strict, or of the more lenient Mennonites,<sup>8</sup> this question is difficult to answer, inasmuch as these expressions are seldom used and understood in this country, and here in this country there are other groups which are narrower or broader in their views than we are.

For example, the so-called New Anabaptists (Apostolic Christian Church) are *narrower*; they cannot even pray with people from other groups. Some fellowships are *broad*, which also admit to the Lord's Supper those who were only baptized in their infancy. And between these two extremes, there are in Switzerland yet divers gradations.

As to whether we are strict or lenient,<sup>9</sup> perhaps you can best decide if I tell you that we consider the confessions of faith in the *Martyrs Mirror*, with which you are certainly familiar, to be in conformity with Scripture. At the same time we do not set this up as a *binding principle* of our faith and conduct; but instead, we embrace *solely* the *Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments*, as a *rule of conduct and standard*, by which we evaluate and judge every confession, and not the converse.

It is our firm position that our confession must be written not so much in a document, but much more in the heart. And to the extent that we have need of something written, we seek here to follow Paul's instruction, where he writes to the Corinthians that we should learn from him and from Apollos *not to think [of men] more than is written*: "Let no one puff himself up in favor of one against another" [1 Cor. 4:6]. So we need the above-mentioned confessions of faith in the *Martyrs Mirror* only for those who are not acquainted with us, to provide a brief understanding of what we are and what we teach, and we uphold these confessions merely insofar as they *agree with Scripture*.

Just as we are not to seek honor among men and women, and since it is not in our domain to name ourselves after Paul or Apollos, for the same reason we seldom use the name Mennonite, and then only to give to those to whom this name is familiar as concise a statement as possible as to who we are, and all the more so since we Swiss Anabaptists already came into being



[illegible]

before Menno, so that he is not the founder of our church. And although we recognize him as a chosen vessel of God, we still respect him only insofar as he taught *in accordance with Scripture*, and should it be that he may have erred in something, this we leave to his account.<sup>10</sup>

Now concerning the several points in which the Mennonites differ from one another, we believe in the *holy Trinity*, that is, in *one* God with three *personalities*, yet not like mortal persons, but that these three are in one another and penetrate one another, in this manner being *one*, as Christ says to Philip: “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father *in* me” [John 14:10]? And, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father [John 14:16-17].

1. We believe that Jesus Christ is God from eternity and that he became human within time, to redeem us through his death from the power of Satan and sin and to make us partakers of his life and of his glory. We believe that although he became flesh through Mary, his humanity notwithstanding, he is not only the son of man and the Son of David, but also the Son of God.

2. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a real being, and not merely a divine strength in people, as some Dutch Mennonites<sup>11</sup> of the present

time claim. And we believe that we are sealed by him for the day of redemption.

In summary, we believe that God—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God over all things, as promised in eternity—so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son so that all who believe on him will not be lost, but have eternal life.

3. We believe in the inherited depravity of man since the Fall of man, and therefore we also believe that Satan is a real being, and not merely a human construct, as some Dutch Mennonites presently claim. We also believe that Jesus Christ's actions were adequate for the sins of humankind, so that in eternity no person will be lost because of inherited depravity, but that all who are lost will be rejected because they did not accept Jesus Christ through faith, not becoming obedient to him, as it is written: Whoever believes on the Son has eternal life, but whoever is disobedient to the Son will not see life, but God's wrath remains with him.<sup>12</sup>

4. We believe that to attain salvation, in addition to the necessary amending of life, a complete spiritual renewal or rebirth is also needed, without which no one can see the kingdom of God, much less enter into it. We believe that we as sinners

are justified by faith alone, without the works of the law, before we ever did a good work pleasing to God, as has been richly testified to us by God that our sins are forgiven gratis for Jesus Christ's sake. We further believe that if we therefore turn to God with a view to accepting his forgiveness, we will be created *unto good works* through Jesus Christ to do the works which God has prepared, for the purpose of walking therein. Through this we give testimony that God has rightly reckoned our faith as righteousness, so that what James wrote will be true for us, that we are justified by works and not by faith alone.

5. Concerning baptism: We baptize no under-age children, but only such persons of such age who confess their faith, and to whom the Holy Spirit gives witness that they are God's children. But if anyone should deceive us and profess to be converted for whom it was not true, then this is known to God. And if it becomes public knowledge, then such a one would be put out if he or she is not converted.

We baptize only in water, actually in *clean* water and *preferably* in *running* water, if it is possible. But if flowing water is not available, then we do it in other [water], for we do not read from Scripture that flowing water is essential. The reason John states as to why John the Baptist baptized in the Jordan near Aenon [John 3:23] was that *much*—meaning *enough*—water was there.<sup>13</sup>

Concerning the kind and the mode of the service, at this time [there is] no fast rule, but rather each time being led by the impelling of the Spirit, considering the nature of the site, sometimes by complete immersion, sometimes by pouring water over the applicant for baptism who is in water with a triple surge of water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Whether the applicant kneels through this, lies down, sits, or stands,<sup>14</sup> such is adjusted according to the depth of the available water, and according to his own desire. I



do not place much significance in such matters, but rather in the fact that this step is taken on the basis of a pure conscience, and in other respects that it be as much as possible like a burial and complete washing and bath. How this is carried out depends on the conditions present at the time.

Otherwise, we do not argue about such matters. Rather, we recognize any baptism which is an expression of faith and obedience, according to the best knowledge and conscience, and [the existing] physical setting. But on principle I *never* baptize someone who is not in water by means of mere pouring.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, we never speculate about the actual meaning of the Greek word, *baptisein*, whether it means *immersion*, or can mean something else, since after all so very few people understand Greek, and [even] the scholars are not agreed thereupon.

6. Concerning the breaking of bread, we observe the Lord's Supper as often as we can, when possible every month, and we allow baptized believers to partake of it, but those only in whom one can sense the life of Christ and whose works do not betray their oral confession.

7. We also observe foot washing of the saints, firstly, when brethren in the faith from a distance visit us, and secondly (usually, yet not always) before the Lord's Supper. Since the three Gospel writers who record the instituting of the Lord's Supper say not a word about foot washing and since, on the other hand, John mentions foot washing, yet talks about the Lord's Supper only in passing, we therefore do not believe the intention of the apostles had been that foot washing *necessarily* is to be *connected* to the Lord's Supper. Nevertheless, since Christ performed it in connection with the Lord's Supper, we therefore consider it to be *legitimate* for us to do likewise.

But we observe foot washing *before* the Lord's Supper, firstly, because we read according to the

corrected biblical interpretation in John, chapter 13:2-4: "After the *supper was prepared* Jesus stands up from the evening meal,"<sup>16</sup> *et cetera*; and secondly, because we see this observance, not only as a sign of humility, but also as an admonition to be spiritually and physically ready to serve and [as a symbol] of brotherliness, and as a sign from God that he washes us from sin in the blood of Jesus daily, and that we are to sit at his table as those who have been washed. It is also instructive for us that just as we wash one another's feet until they are clean, so we should also beware of blackening, slandering, and defaming one another. Even much more than this, we should strive to cleanse and sanctify one another.

8. Concerning marriage, we allow it [only] in *the Lord*, that is, with a believing person who through baptism has put on Christ. But if anyone should err so far that he should marry an unbeliever or a baptized unbeliever, he would thereby have separated himself from Christ and his church, and could be received again only after true repentance and conversion, no matter whether or not his spouse conceived. For we consider marriage to be insoluble except in the case of adultery.

9. Concerning church discipline, minor offenses call for a warning and, if necessary, exclusion from the Lord's Supper, and *greater or persistent smaller* [offences] call for the *ban* with *shunning*—shunning however without conjugal separation,<sup>17</sup> unless it should come to the place that the banned spouse should become a snare to the other. In such a case, this one is at liberty to live alone until the situation gets better. Nevertheless in this matter the actual one who discerns [the case] must weigh carefully the individual's unique circumstances.

I pass over the remaining points since [here] I think we are no different from other Mennonites. The only thing that I still want to mention is that we hold fast to nonresistance, which in some churches, especially

in Holland and France, has been abandoned.

Your two final questions remain to be answered: Concerning the number of Mennonites in Switzerland and the total of their membership, I can give you no satisfactory answer at this time, since I am not well acquainted with all of them. But I hope to be able to give you accurate information at a later time.

As far as I know there are six groups of Anabaptists in Switzerland: 1. The Zürcher Baptists (regular Baptists).<sup>18</sup> 2. The Neugatter Baptists. These have open fellowship with those who baptize infants. These two groups are not nonresistant and baptize by immersion. 3. The New Anabaptists (Apostolic Christian Church) are nonresistant, practice the ban and shunning but not foot washing, and usually baptize by immersion. This third group is the largest and also the narrowest, for they anathematize all others. 4. The Old Anabaptists of Bern are nonresistant, but do not shun or practice foot washing. They baptize by pouring, in rooms. They have two congregations, a fairly large one in the Freibergen with four full ministers [elders], and one in the Emmenthal with two full ministers. These number about 180 members. 5. The Neuchâtel<sup>19</sup> and Basel Old Anabaptists, or so-called Amish, practice the ban and footwashing, but are asleep concerning shunning and nonresistance, and baptize by pouring. I am not well acquainted with the fellowship in the canton of Basel. The fellowship in the canton of Neuchâtel numbers something over 100 members and has two or three full ministers. 6. Finally, my group, whose teaching I have briefly written about above, usually classifies itself as Amish, and a few years ago split from the Neuchâtel Amish church because this group is presently in decline and resists every reform. In a word, there remained no longer any discipline and order. For that reason six of us split off and organized collectively



and we now have only 16 members, since one of the six first members has already died. Most of us [in this group] live in the canton of Neuchâtel, where I myself lived earlier and where I plan to return soon.

These are the accounts, dear friend, and brother, which I presently can give. The Lord willing, I can write you more detailed accounts later. And if it is agreeable to you to give me further reports from America, I want very much to accept them as a way to strengthen and encourage the fellowship of the heart with my otherwise unknown children of God, with which anticipation, with brotherly greeting, I append my name as your insignificant

Ch. Aug. Ramseyer

My address from now on will be:  
Ch. Aug. Ramseyer, In couvet,  
C[anto]n Neuchâtel, Switzerland.

*As the note below indicates, Shem Zook, the recipient of this letter, forwarded it to Joas Yoder and others, accompanied by said note. When the letter eventually got to Swartzendruber in Iowa, he evidently made a copy of it and appended Zook's note to his copy.*

February 28, 1861

Friend and Brother Joas Yoder<sup>20</sup>

After you have read this letter, then hand it to J. K. Yoder and let old father Brand[t] see it also, and then send it quickly to (gross) Mose Miller,<sup>21</sup> and you, dear friend and brother M. Miller, when you have shown the letter to your fellow ministers, then send it to Jacob Swartzendruber,<sup>22</sup> Iowa City, Johnson Co., Iowa.

From your insignificant friend,  
Shem Zook

*Leonard Gross is consulting archivist at the Archives of the Mennonite Church. Paton Yoder is author of Tradition and Transition.*

1. Letter, Delbert Gratz to Paton Yoder, 12 October 1995.

2. Mennonitisches Lexikon, III, 427.

3. See John A. Hostetler, "Memoirs of Shem Zook (1798-1880): A Biography," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 38 (July 1964), 280-303, and S. Duane Kauffman, *Mifflin County Amish and Mennonite Story, 1791-1991* (Mifflin County Mennonite Historical Society, 1991) for further identification of Shem Zook.

4. Concerning Zook's and Beiler's preoccupation with the stream baptism issue, see Paton Yoder, *Tradition and Transition: Amish Mennonites and Old Order Amish, 1800-1900* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1991), 121-127.

5. John Umble, "Catalog of an Amish Bishop's Library," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 20 (July 1946), 230-239.

6. See the editors' introduction as to how Ramseyer's letter got into Swartzendruber's hands.

7. Zook had asked many questions of Ramseyer about Amish faith and practice in Europe, and Ramseyer had answered them quite thoroughly, all of which led Swartzendruber to liken the letter to a confession of faith.

8. European Amish of the 19th century often called themselves Mennonites.

9. Zook had evidently asked Ramseyer whether the Amish in Europe were strict or lenient in their administration of church discipline. The term, *streng* (strict), was used by American Amish primarily in connection with the ban and shunning. Here, as elsewhere in his letter, Ramseyer implies that Zook's questions are a little simplistic; he cannot answer in a word or two.

10. Ramseyer had already emphasized that the Swiss Anabaptists accepted the Dordrecht Confession of Faith (with its Netherlands origins) only to the extent that it was *Schriftgemäss* (in agreement with Scripture) and now asserts that Menno Simons' life and writings must certainly be subject to the same scrutiny. Ramseyer may also be reflecting a Swiss Anabaptist disinclination to be tied too closely to the Mennonites of The Netherlands.

11. Here as elsewhere, Ramseyer exhibits some comprehension of the currents of theology of his day and, in particular, of the prevailing Mennonite theology in The Netherlands.

12. Clearly this passage is lifted from John 3:36. However the Lutheran and Froschauer versions of this verse speak of God's wrath falling on those who do not believe, whereas Ramseyer writes of the wrath of God falling on those who do not obey. The NRSV supports Ramseyer's version. Ramseyer's emphasis on obedience is pushed further later when he asserts that ultimately man is justified by faith and works (Section 3, below).

13. These references to baptism in flowing water must certainly be a response to Zook's inquiries on this subject! In 1860-61 the Amish ministers and laity of Mifflin County were preoccupied with this question. Ramseyer responds that the biblical criterion on this question is that there be

enough water, not that the water be flowing.

14. Ramseyer may be twitting Zook about his preoccupation with a matter which he, Ramseyer, considers to be of little or no consequence.

15. The German word "Besprengung," which can also be translated "sprinkling," has been translated here and below as "pouring," given the Anabaptist and later Mennonite baptismal practice, which has consistently been either "pouring" or immersion, but not sprinkling. See the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, "Baptism" (esp. I:226), and the *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, "Taufe" (esp. IV:287) for the historical background.

16. The Lutheran version reads, "after the supper," etc.

17. That a guilty spouse could continue in conjugal relationship with his or her marriage partner, but otherwise be shunned by such was an option never considered by any Amish fellowship in 19th-century America.

18. The term "(regular baptists)," including the parentheses, appears in English in this document. This may be an interpolation by the copier, Jacob Swartzendruber.

19. In German, Neuenburg.

20. The identity of this Joas Yoder is not clear. The other ministers to whom Zook was forwarding this letter were Amish bishops, so one could assume that he meant to send the letter, in like manner, to the bishop of the Wayne County congregation. But in 1862 the bishop at that place was not Joas Yoder. J(ohn) K. Yoder, to whom Joas was to "hand" Ramseyer's letter, had taken that office in 1859. That leaves two mysteries: Who was Joas Yoder, and why was the letter not addressed to J(ohn) K. Yoder? The only solution which comes to mind is the remote possibility that Zook thought that yet another Yoder, Jacob D. Yoder, was still bishop of the Wayne County congregation at this time, and was sending this letter to him for this reason. But obviously this leaves unanswered the questions of why Zook called the addressee Joas, and why he did not know that he (that is, Jacob D. Yoder) had been forced out of office in 1859. Shem Zook knew both Jacob D. and John K. Yoder, for both had moved earlier, in their adult years, from Zook's Mifflin County to Wayne County, Ohio.

21. Gross Mose was bishop of the Walnut Creek congregation in Holmes County, Ohio. More progressive than the other Holmes County congregations, the latter broke fellowship with Mose's congregation before the year 1861 was out.

22. Whereas the other Amish ministers to which Zook was sending this letter were already known to be moderately change-minded (as contrasted to tradition-minded), which direction Bishop Jacob Swartzendruber of Johnson County, Iowa, would take was not clear as of 1861. In the years which followed, however, he gravitated toward the traditionalist position.

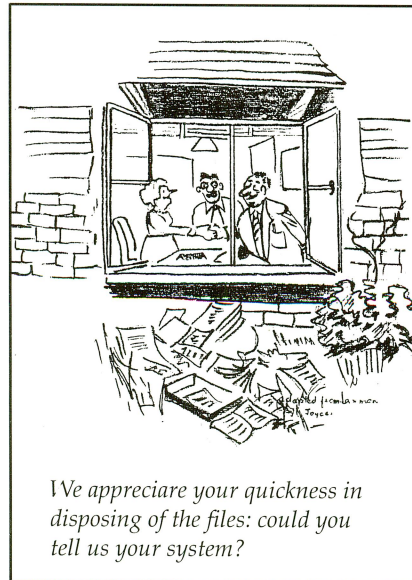


# Archives of the Mennonite Church

## By Dennis Stoesz

*What follows is a sampling of personal papers and organizational records that have come into the archives during 1995 and the first six months of 1996. They are listed alphabetically by the name of the collection.*

**Graber, Esther, 1912-1996, Goshen, Indiana. Scrapbook, 1978,** entitled "This is Thursday, *Mission News Sheet* takes priority, eg. NOT FOR PUBLICATION, April 1978." Graber received this upon her retirement and in commemoration of her 28-year service with Mennonite Board of Missions. The scrapbook includes 1978 correspondence, photographs, cards, and cartoons from many of the missionaries and colleagues she had come in contact with in editing the news sheet and in her work as administrative assistant to J. D. Graber and Wilbert R. Shenk in the Overseas Department, 1950-78. One scrapbook. Donor: Lena Graber, sister.



*Drawing of Esther Graber, who worked in the Overseas Department of MBM as administrative assistant for J. D. Graber and Wilbert Shenk, 1950-1978. Drawing is by Joyce \_\_\_\_\_ and is taken from the 1978 scrapbook given Graber on her retirement. Source: Esther Graber (1912-1996) Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.*



*David A. and Wilma Shank (l-r) chatting with Esther Graber at Graber's retirement from the Mennonite Board of Missions, 1978.*  
Credit: Esther Graber Collection. Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

**Hernley, H. Ralph, Goshen, Indiana.** Papers, 1860-1982, including correspondence, reports, minutes, clippings, magazines, and books reflecting Hernley's involvement in Civilian Public Service, Goshen College, and such Mennonite organizations as Mennonite Community Association, Mennonite Economic Development Associates, and Mennonite Board of Education. Also includes older materials such as diaries, 1872-74, from John S. Loucks (1848- ); school treasurer books, 1884-86, from Jacob S. Loucks (1829-1916); books from his father, Henry R. Hernley, who worked at the Mennonite Publishing House from 1907-53; a photograph and letter regarding Mennonite boys at Camp Lee, 1918; a diary of Ethel Jane Loucks, ca. 1930; a diary from John R. Loucks, 1947-48; and historical materials on the schools and history of Scottdale, Pa., which celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1954. 11.25 linear feet. Donor: H. Ralph Hernley.

**Holdeman Mennonite Church, 1851-, Wakarusa, Indiana.** Church records, 1929-95, including Women's Sewing Circle minutes, reports, and financial records, 1929-73; Sunday school secretary book, 1942; funeral dinner record books, 1949-53 and 1970-72; summer Bible school pupil records, 1959-91; record of Torchbearers' activities, 1976-85; Christmas plates to shut-ins, 1987-94; and church bulletins, newsletters, and reports for 1995. 1.7 linear feet. Donor: Miriam and Virginia Weldy, and congregational historians John and Lowell Nunemaker.

**Hoover, Ira J., 1907-1996, Goshen, Indiana.** Papers, 1841-1996, which reflect Hoover's life as a teacher in various rural schools in Harrison Township, Elkhart County, from 1928-42. Also includes sou-



venir school booklets, diplomas, certificates, farming diary (1943-44), birthday books, family Bible records, autograph album, etc., which came from his spouse, Clara Mumaw; his father, Daniel S. Hoover, who was a farmer; his ancestor, J. S. Hoover, who also was a school teacher in Harrison Township, 1875-81; and his grandparents, Jacob H. and Anna (Overholt) Kreider, who originated from Bethel Mennonite Church, Wadsworth, Ohio, and settled in Indiana in the late 19th century. 1.25 linear feet. Donor: Herb Maust, executor of Hoover estate.

**Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, 1943- , Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania.** Records, 1976-89, of the programs and events at Laurelville through these years, which included children and youth camps, adult retreats, special symposiums, and conferences. The material includes correspondence, reports, contracts, photographs, brochures, and 33 audio tapes. Program directors who served during this period were Arnold Cressman, -1977, James E. Metzler, 1977-82, James E. Hirsch, 1982-84, and Levi Miller, 1984-91. 6.25 linear feet. Donor: Robert Koch, program

director.

**Leichty, Jacob, 1819-1896,** Collection. Papers, 1840-1887, originating from France; Ont., Canada; Stark County, Ohio; and Henry and Washington Counties, Iowa. It includes correspondence, 1840-1852, and 1877; French and United States citizenship papers, 1840 and 1856 respectively; an indenture, 1851; a land certificate, 1852; a military exemption, 1862; and some land and estate documents, 1853-87. Leichty emigrated from France to North America in his youth, first going to Ontario, 1840-47; then to Wayne County, Ohio, about 1847-51; and then to Henry and Washington Counties, Iowa, 1851-87. Correspondents include Peter Stoll, Jean Liechty, Christ Graber, Christian and Daniel Eicher, and Christ Liechty. One legal file folder. Donor: Delia Herr, Goshen, Indiana, on behalf of Leichty family.

**Mennonite Board of Education, 1905- , Elkhart, Indiana.** Official Central Files, 1951-86, the bulk of which date from 1977-86. These records reflect the changing program of this board during these years. This included being responsible to the Mennonite Church for the operation of Goshen Biblical

Seminary, and Hesston and Goshen Colleges, and came to include Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary as well. The work also entailed a coordinating and consulting role with the 11 high schools, through the Secondary Education Council, and came to include working with the 18 elementary schools through the Elementary Education Council. Minority and Pastoral Leadership Education, helping minority young people obtain a high school education through the High-Aim program, providing direction in theological education, student aid, and the Conrad Grebel Lectureship were also part of the program. Personnel during 1977 to 1986 were Albert J. Meyer as executive secretary, and staff persons Paul Bender, Alvin H. Brown, Marilyn Grasse Brubaker, Donald Garber, Arthur J. Griffin, Helen Hostetler, John J. Hostetter Jr., Lynn J. Miller, Gerald L. Mumaw, Irving N. Perez, Averno M. Rempel, Glen A. Roth, John E. Sharp, Kathy Smoker, Leamon Sowell Jr., Loren E. Swartzendruber, and Orville L. Yoder. 25 linear feet. Donor: Ruth E. Schrock, Mennonite Board of Education.

**Mennonite Board of Missions, 1908- , Student and Young Adult Services, Elkhart, Indiana.** Records, 1970-90, reflecting the work of three directors over this time period: Virgil Brenneman, 1959-74; Hubert L. Brown, 1974-80; and Myrna Burkholder, 1980-90. Organized into two sets of files, 1970-80 and 1980-90, these records include correspondence minutes, reports, and the newsletters *Forum*, 1970-81; *Feedback*, 1977-90; *in search*, 1983-91; and *Menno News*. 6 linear feet. Donor: Ruth I. Horst and Ethel Hoffman, Mennonite Board of Missions.

**Smith, Willard H. and Verna (Graber), Goshen, Indiana.** Papers, 1917-92, including correspondence with family and between Willard Smith and Verna Graber, 1917-32; school notes from Smith's time at




*Photograph: Interior of Holdeman Mennonite Church, 1915. Church building was built in 1908. Notice the rail down the center separating the men's side (to the right) from the women's side (to the left), and the long pulpit in the front, kept in the church until the 1950s. Persons in front are Peter B. Yoder (on the right) 1855-1943, with son Huber Yoder, 1903-1959. Photograph identified by historian John Nunemaker.*

*Credit: Holdeman Mennonite Church Photograph Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.*



University of Wisconsin and Chicago, 1920s-32; manuscripts of his research and book projects, 1939-83, *Schulyer Colfax, Paraguayan Interlude, William Jennings Bryan, and Mennonites in Illinois*; diary of Verna (Graber) Smith of trip to Paraguay, ca. 1949-50; office papers and artifacts from Willard H. Smith's long career as professor of history at Goshen College, 1929-72; photographs and slides; graduation diploma and robes; and a trunk used for their trip to Paraguay. 26 linear feet. Donor: Willard H. Smith.

**South Central Mennonite Conference, 1876- , North Newton, Kansas.** Records of the South Texas Mennonite Church Council, 1959-67, 1971-77, and 1984-88. Includes papers of J. Weldon Martin, Corpus Christi, Tex., 1959-67; those of Chuy Navarro, Premont, Tex., 1971-77, who was chair of this council; and those of Angel Luis Miranda, Alice, Tex., 1984-88, who was District Minister for the Council. 4.4 linear feet. Donor: Lois Leinbach, Administrative Secretary.

**Umble, Roy H., Goshen, Indiana.** Papers, 1925-94, including correspondence back home with Ferne (Smith) Umble, and with his parents, John S. and Alice (Landis) Umble, while Umble was serving in Civilian Public Service, 1944-46. Also includes papers which reflect Umble's long-standing involvement as professor in forensics, speech, drama, and peace at Goshen College, 1946-83; papers given at the Intercollegiate Peace Speech Contest, 1948-55, as well as the early history of this association, 1906-25, by Al Albrecht; correspondence from sabbatical trips to Greece, 1956-58, and to Barbados, 1966-67, and involvement in the China Educational Exchange program, 1983-86; correspondence with family, friends and colleagues; an autobiography, ca. 1980-93; and photographs. 10 linear feet. Donor: Roy H. Umble. 

# Mennonite High School Education at Half Century

*Opening A Window to the World: A History of Iowa Mennonite School*, by Franklin L. Yoder. Kalona: Iowa Mennonite School, 1994, Pp. 319. \$16.95 (paper), \$24.95 (hardcover).

*Lead us On: A History of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate*, by Samuel J. Steiner. Kitchener: Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, 1995, Pp. 372. \$15 Canada, \$11 U.S.

by Dale Shenk

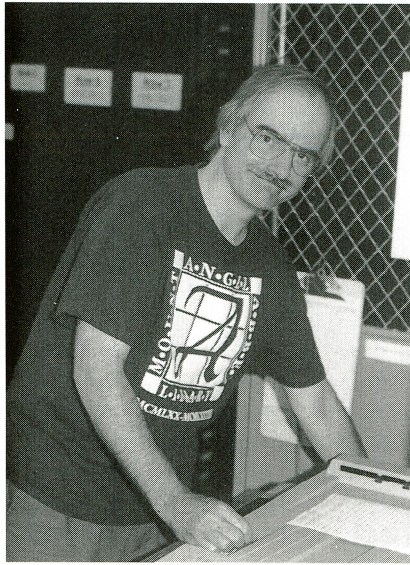
Early in this century, a minority of students attended school beyond the eight grade. Among Mennonites this percentage was even lower. As public high school became more routine in the 1930s, Mennonite participation also increased. Church leaders recognized potential negative affects of exposing church youth to the values and practices of the secular culture through high school attendance. They began to look for ways to provide education in settings that could also incorporate the values and teaching of the church. In communities across North America, the solution to this problem was to open Mennonite high schools. This was done in Lancaster, Pa., in 1942, Leamington, Ont., Salem, Ore., and Belleville Pa., in 1945, Souderton, Pa., in 1953 and Goshen, Ind., in 1954. As these institutions approach or pass their 50th anniversaries, we observe that many have significantly shifted away from their original purpose. Now, instead of protecting the students from the world, they seem to encourage dialogue with it.

Two such schools are Iowa Mennonite School and Rockway Mennonite Collegiate. On the occasion of their 50th anniversaries in 1994, each institution commissioned a history. *Opening a Window to the*

*World: A History of Iowa Mennonite School* is written by Franklin L. Yoder. Yoder grew up on a farm in eastern Iowa and attended IMS. After operating a business for a number of years, he returned to school, received a degree in history, and is currently a doctoral candidate in American history at the University of Chicago. *Lead Us On: A History of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate* is authored by Sam Steiner. He is librarian and archivist at Conrad Grebel College in Ontario. Steiner has done writing and editing on other Mennonite history projects.

In these volumes the writers provide many stories and biographical information about students, faculty, administration, and facilities. Those who have been a part of these communities will read factual background to most of the major decisions in each school's history. In addition, there are many anecdotes about students and faculty which lend a more narrative feel. The slow, steady growth in the facilities is treated systematically, especially as it related to conference connections and financial support. Each text chronicles the administrators' struggles to run a school while balancing a budget. This 50-year journey of regular uncertainty demonstrates that some of the current financial concerns may not be as new as they seem.





*Author Sam Steiner*  
Credit: Dennis Stoesz

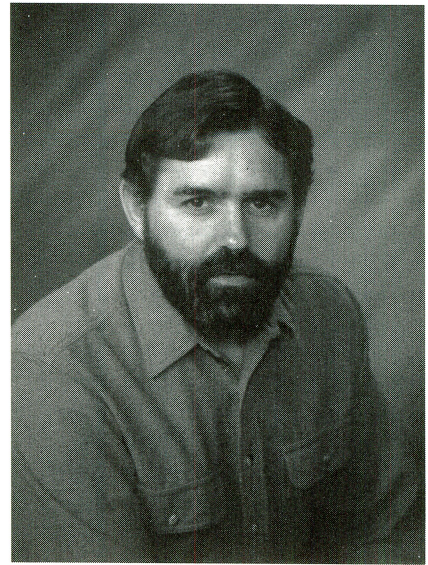
The two books differ dramatically in their style and approach to similar tasks. Yoder begins with a description of the ways the creeks in this Iowa settlement flow and how that shaped the early settlers views of the community. Throughout the book he continues to identify the close connections between IMS and the church community. The details of the first 25 years show intimately the development and struggles in the relationship between the school and its constituencies. A more careful presentation of the school's struggles in the 1970s and 1980s would have been helpful. These sections seem to blur together. Yoder's description of the present school is well done. Current and future themes are identified. While recognizing IMS's changes in the past 50 years, Yoder also acknowledges continuous cords that stretch back through the decades. If one were to join this community today, this book would offer a good perspective for what it was, and is, like to live in Kalona.

Steiner approaches his topic by making connections between RMC and popular culture, Mennonite thinkers, and public education. He gives an excellent description of Ontario's educational system which

he weaves into the text. In addition, he identifies some basic issues of Mennonite education as discussed by various church leaders. An example of this is a fascinating dialogue on Mennonite secondary education between RMC principal Ross Bender and theologian John Howard Yoder. Steiner also gives good attention to questions of finance and facility. Appropriately, his narrative is organized around the different administrators' eras, since the turnover and different styles shaped school life. Other than occasional connections related to financial decisions, we are not in touch with the Ontario church community. There are numerous references to other schools and how their geographical relationships affected Rockway. A map might have made this part of the narrative more clear. As with Yoder's work on IMS, current issues and themes are well identified. The future existence of RMC seems sure. However, its nature, as with IMS, is uncertain.

What these narratives share most completely is the recognition that both schools no longer function as environments to protect high school students from the secular culture, as they were expected to in 1944. Instead, students are given opportunities to study and examine all of the world around them. A brief look at four basic areas will demonstrate how the writers trace changes in the schools. These changes reflect a shift in orientation away from an outward emphasis on Mennonite distinctives. Throughout their lives IMS and RMC have slowly become conventional high schools in their music programs, athletics, faculty, boards, and the appearance of their students. In each of these areas, the founding fathers and mothers had some specific expectations about ways that the school would be distinctive. Now their identity as explicitly Mennonite schools is more difficult to assess. Perhaps this is also true of the congregations which support them.

For decades music has been a



*Frank Yoder*

distinguishing characteristic of the Mennonite church. In 1945 the style was uniform across the church. Congregations did not have instruments in their buildings since all singing was done a cappella. Both RMC and IMS began with a musical program limited to singing hymns in class several times a week. This gave way by the end of the first decade to choral music that included classical pieces as part of the seasonal concerts. Early attempts at acquiring pianos were met with reluctance and refusal. RMC acquired a piano with the reluctant approval of the church in 1949. IMS was refused permission to purchase a piano on several occasions. In 1966 one was quietly donated to the school and accepted without discussion by the conference, with later informal approval. The musical programs in each school soon expanded to include other instruments, and eventually, orchestras. Today these schools' music programs look like the programs in other schools in their communities. Students sing and play the same kinds of pieces that their peers do in public high schools. Sacred themes are part of the performances but the a cappella hymns of the earlier era are seldom heard.



The faculty will always be at the heart of any school as they shape the students through curriculum and administrative direction. As small, new church schools, both IMS and RMC searched for teachers who were willing to come with a sense of mission and ministry that aligned with the local church. Initially, this meant that theological and lifestyle agreement were more important than academic credentials. Teachers were asked if they would wear the plain coat and cape dresses at IMS. At RMC the first teachers were drawn from the church constituency, even though their academic qualifications were limited. Sometimes this meant teachers were working in areas outside their field of expertise. As each school grew in size and financial strength, commitment to pay higher salaries brought more candidates with stronger academic credentials. While it is assumed that both schools were looking for faculty with a high degree of church commitment, teachers were hired as much for their academic and cultural contributions as for their church membership and ministerial credentials. Today teachers at IMS and RMC are trained educators, employed by a Mennonite high school.

A major component of high school life in the second half of this century is sports. All high school students recognize that, even if some choose not to participate, the high school sports program still dominates much of their school life. IMS and RMC began when public high school sports were less important. Mennonites believed that organized competition was wrong. A few reasons cited were pacifism and simple dress. Teachers were assigned physical education classes, but there was little formal emphasis on developing team sports abilities for the first two decades in each school. IMS students participated in regular sporting events but none were sanctioned by the school until boys sports in 1972 and girls sports a few years later. RMC developed

its first team sports in 1968. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, both schools expanded their athletic programs, built facilities, and added teams. Today each school competes with some success in public school leagues. Spectators would be hard pressed to distinguish IMS and RMC players from their public school opponents.

Since local Mennonite church conferences founded both IMS and RMC, early decision making was done by conference leaders. In each case a board or committee was appointed by the conference to oversee the development and administration of the school. Again, in each case, by the late 1960s, the schools were becoming more independent. Conference groups, controlled by pastors or other persons with church leadership connections were replaced with boards of lay leaders. These persons maintained the same degree of commitment to the school, but at this point in each of the schools' histories, there seems to have been more freedom to set policy and to make decisions for the survival of the school rather than for continuity with conference standards. The tight control of the early years was replaced by boards representing a variety of interests. In these cases, it is clear that the schools were simply reflecting the growing autonomy of the congregations. The conferences no longer set boundaries. Congregations, institutions, and perhaps even individuals made decisions primarily on their own.

Another distinctive that was shared by these schools with the larger church in the 1940s was dress. Mennonites were still significantly set apart by a commitment to plain dress, characterized by plain coats for men, especially leaders, and coverings for women. For high school students, these principles were defined as dresses of a certain length and head coverings for girls, and long pants and dress shirts for boys. Both RMC and IMS were expected to uphold the standard on


these issues. Teachers were hired based on their willingness to agree to these standards. Students, as representatives of the school, were evaluated on their appearance as they gave programs in churches.

These standards were maintained well into the 1950s at Iowa; movement away from them took place informally. Teachers' requests, changing congregational practices, and the age-old drive of young adults to push the boundaries contributed to the relaxation of these dress standards. Examples of this are virtually identical in each volume. It seemed that more and more girls began to "forget" to wear their coverings to chapel. And when they did, they were less and less likely to be sent back to get them. This simple pattern demonstrates the variety of forces that contributed to the decreasing expectations regarding these old standards. Now each school maintains only the most basic rules regarding dress, and these are not significantly different than those one would find in a public school.

Although they began as distinctive havens from the secular world, at the end of their first 50 years, these schools look and feel much like public high schools. They have athletic teams, orchestras, trained teachers, school boards, and students who look just like their peers in the high school across town. IMS and RMC students encounter information that is very similar to that taught in other schools. Through stories, facts, and reflections, both Steiner and Yoder trace narratives of a movement from protectionism to dialogue. It is clear that these schools no longer fit the mandate they were given 50 years ago.

So what should Mennonite High school education look like? If it is not obviously different from public education, what are the distinctives? Yoder and Steiner suggest that the basic commitment to God's way in the world remains strong at both IMS and RMC. Students are invited and encouraged to make a place for



God in the midst of subject matter that is typical of public education. The schools' understandings of who God is remain true to Mennonite theology. Both volumes suggest that the practices of this theology have simply shifted along with congregational shifts. In that sense these schools mirror the church. They no longer look like the separate Mennonite institutions. The congregations which founded them have changed as well. So ultimately, questions about the changes in the schools are simply reflections of church issues. Who are we? What is our identity as Mennonites? These are good questions for all of us. 

## News and Notes

**A conference for congregational and conference historians, pastors, congregational leaders and educators** is being planned for May 9-10, 1997, in Harrisonburg, Va. Titled *The Riddle of Things Past* (Ps. 78:2, NEB), the conference will feature John L. Ruth, Harleysville, Pa., as the keynote speaker, along with a variety of workshops. The purpose of the gathering is to motivate participants to pay attention to the church's heritage and to train congregational historians. The conference is being sponsored by the Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians, the Virginia Conference Historical Society, and the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church. It will be hosted by Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

The Menno Simons Historical Library at Eastern Mennonite University has announced the recipient of the **Harry A. Brunk Scholars Award**.

Mark R. Wenger of Waynesboro, Va., was selected to receive the \$2,000 award to work on the topic "Origins of Anointing the Sick with Oil in the Mennonite Church."

Wenger is currently co-pastor

with his wife, Kathy Weaver Wenger, of the Springdale Mennonite Church near Waynesboro. He is also a doctoral student at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond.

"Anointing the sick with oil as a religious healing rite apparently was not practiced among the 16th-century Anabaptists and their Mennonite descendants in Europe," Wenger noted in his research proposal. "Somewhere in the latter half of the 19th century, the practice emerged in Mennonite communities in North America and within several decades came to be sanctioned as one of the church's seven official 'ordinances.' I intend to reconstruct the origins of anointing the sick among Mennonites and the theological and social context surrounding its appearance," he stated.

Call for papers. An informal consortium of Mennonite historical societies invites papers and proposals for an upcoming conference entitled **"One People, Many Stories: Comparing Mennonite Experiences in the United States and Canada Through the Twentieth Century."** The sponsoring organizations include the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, the Mennonite Historical Society of the United States, the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church, the Historical Commission of the Mennonite Brethren Church, and the Brethren in Christ Historical Society. Held at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, British Columbia, on October 23-25, 1997, the conference will be focused on the Mennonite experience in North America, north and south of the U.S.-Canada border. Session should thus include an explicit comparative dimension. Topics should address, for instance, Canadian and U.S. Mennonite responses to social forces such as military service, nationalism, minority status, evangelicalism/fundamentalism, and popular culture

of urbanization. Mennonite experiences in terms of race, gender or ethnicity could come under scrutiny; similarly, contrasting Mennonite initiatives in missions, service, or peacemaking might be examined. Papers of a more reflective nature are also encouraged. Papers may be weighted toward, but are not restricted to, 20th-century developments.

Proposals are welcome both for individual papers and for entire sessions (2-3 papers, comments, and discussion in a 1 1/2-to-2 hour session). Send proposals to Perry Bush, co-chair, Planning Committee, History Department, Bluffton College, 280 W. College Ave, Bluffton, OH 45817. Deadline: January 10, 1997.

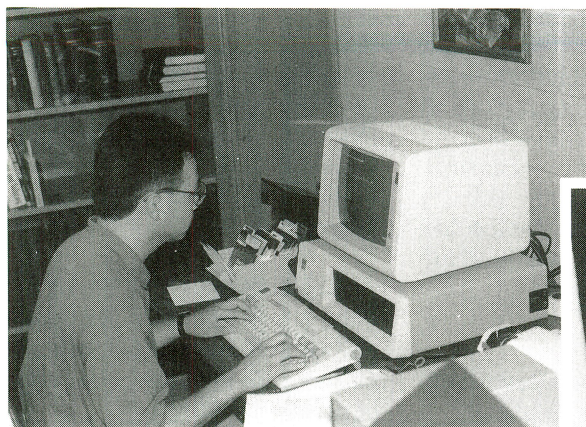
Call for papers. The Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups, Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pa., invites papers for a conference **"Anabaptists in Conversation: Mennonites and Brethren Interactions with Theologies in the Twentieth Century,"** June 19-21, 1997. Papers may explore influences on Mennonite and/or Brethren thought from others' theologies, or vice versa, or both. Planners may give some preference to proposals for more formal "theology," yet papers may also discuss more experiential expressions, e.g., pentecostal, holiness, or charismatic movements. Topics on liberation theologies and variants such as feminist theology are of course welcomed. Proposals for exploring how pacifism has or has not informed theological thought regarding salvation, christology, nature of church, eschatology, etc., may receive some special consideration. Address questions to Theron F. Schlach, June 1997 Conference Director. Send proposals to June 1997 Conference, The Young Center, Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA 17022-2298. Deadline: December 1, 1996.



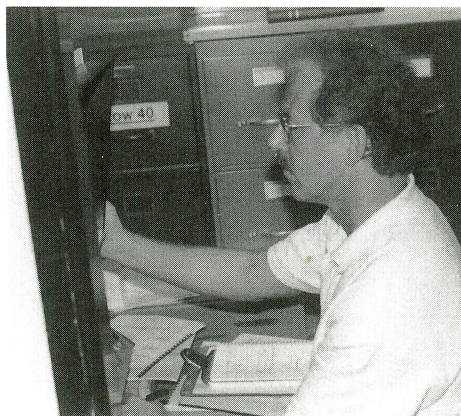
*The Archives staff and the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church are guided by the following mission statement: God calls us to preserve our heritage, to interpret our story, and to proclaim God's work among us.*



*Archives staff: (l-r) John E. Sharp, director; Leonard Gross, Consulting Archivist; Marilyn Voran, Archive Assistant; Dennis Stoesz, Archivist, and Ruth Schrock, Archive Assistant. Photo by David Stoesz.*



*A volunteer, Shuji Moriichi, of Elkhart, is typing out a congregational inventory listing for Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind., on an IMB XT computer donated recently to the Archives of the Mennonite Church by Dohn Fast, Hutchinson, Kansas. Photo by Dennis Stoesz.*



*Peter Letkemann, a scholar researching 17th-century Hutterite hymn books on a 3M microfilm reader/printer recently donated to the Archives of the Mennonite Church by Dohn Fast, Hutchinson, Kansas. Photo by Dennis Stoesz.*

## **Mennonite Historical Bulletin**

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*Ora Troyer stands by one of his creations, a model of a horse-drawn snow plow used to clear logging roads.*

*Credit: Dennis Stoesz*

## Ora Troyer: Steward of His Community's History

by Dennis Stoesz

In April of 1990, I had the opportunity to visit Fairview, Michigan. The invitation came from a longtime and senior member of the community, Ora Troyer. After some 20 years of collecting and compiling information on the history of the community, Troyer had decided to deposit a bulk of his materials at the Archives of the Mennonite Church

and the Mennonite Historical Library in Goshen, Indiana. This led me to become acquainted with Troyer by telephone and correspondence. I also learned some of the story of the community from the archival materials Troyer sent to Goshen. This in turn led to Troyer's invitation to see the community first-hand.

The migration of the Amish and Amish-Mennonites to this northern

part of Michigan occurred at the turn of this century. The land had been cleared of timber by the lumber companies in the latter part of the 19th century, and the companies were encouraging people to buy and settle the land. First, Amish migrants from Indiana and Ohio arrived in Oscoda County. Soon the Amish-Mennonites from Kokomo and Nappanee, Indiana, followed, generally settling west of



the Amish settlements. By 1914, the Amish began moving out of the area, while the Amish-Mennonites had by then established the Fairview Mennonite congregation (1904). The General Conference Mennonite congregation at Comins was started in the early 1920s.

One of Troyer's first projects, after retiring as a mechanic from the Highway Department of Michigan in 1969, was to map the settlements of the Amish. Troyer himself has Amish roots. His parents, Emanuel S. and Sarah (Miller) Troyer, were Amish from Lagrange County, Indiana, who had moved to the Fairview area in 1914. Troyer did not restrict his research to the Fairview, Oscoda County, area, but also researched the Luce, Ogemaw, Midland, and Alpena counties in Michigan. Much of his research was published in *Family Life*, an Amish paper from Aylmer, Ontario.

Troyer was also interested in the general history of the community: the lumber companies, the once-rich network of railroads used to transport the lumber, the land deals, the sawmills, the various locations of the hub of the community ("the post office"), the development of the roads and highways (which his father and he had helped build), the years and locations of the various schools in the area, and the various churches. This led him to research several of these topics. For example, he interviewed Stanley Marsh, an old-time lumberjack. As a result,



*Fairview Mennonite Church History Book Committee: (left-right) Ora Troyer, Beverly Friend, Norma Troyer, MaryLou Green, Genevieve Troyer, Virgil Hershberger. Credit: Dennis Stoesz*

Troyer constructed small wooden replicas of equipment once used by the logging camps. He donated these museum pieces to a local Christian camp, Camp Barakel, where they are on display to help orient children to the rich logging heritage of the area.

Woodworking has been another retirement highlight for Troyer. For several years running, he built a standing grandfather clock for auction at the Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale held at Fairview each year.

Seemingly there was strong local historical interest in the Upper Peninsula during the 1970s and 1980s. The local Oscoda County

history, Oscoda County, 1881, was written in the mid-1970s by members of the Au Sable River Valley Historical Association. The local newspaper, *Oscoda County News*, celebrated its centennial in 1981 and carried several feature articles on the Amish and the Mennonites. A local magazine, *Wilderness Chronicle*, edited by local resident and writer, Nelson Yoder, was begun in the mid-1980s. It has featured many historical articles on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The Steiner Museum, located just two miles north of Fairview, houses many artifacts and photographs of the area and features a reconstructed school building. Troyer collected many of

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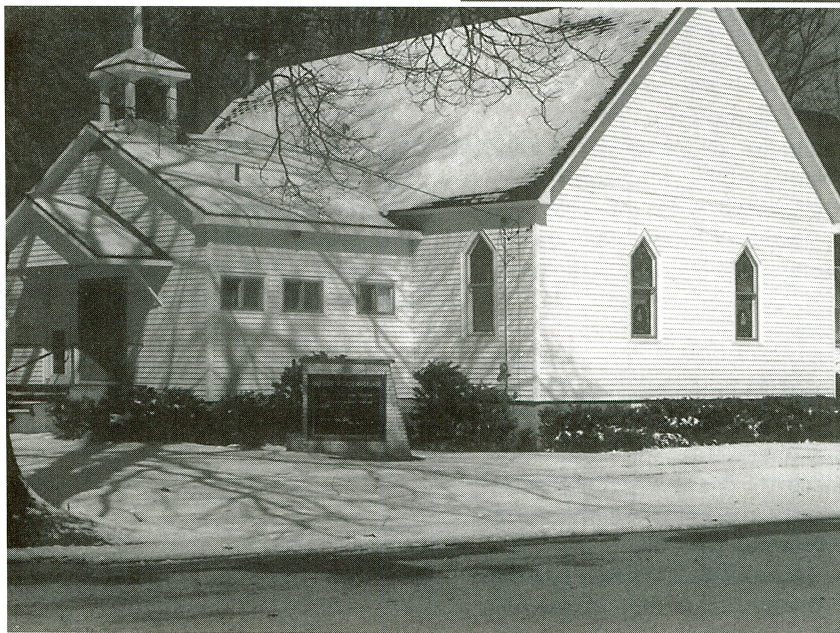


**Right:** The current meetinghouse of the Fairview Mennonite Church.

*Credit: Dennis Stoesz*

**Below:** A few members who favored a more liberal discipline left Fairview to form a new congregation in 1925. The Comins congregation, located five miles north of Fairview, joined the Central District of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

*Credit: Dennis Stoesz*



these clippings and books as he pursued his historical interests.

Troyer also was interested in his own family history. He has a 1934 Head Tax Receipt from his father from the Depression days, as well as a World War II War Ration book. Troyer has retained pictures of when he attended the Special Bible Term at Goshen College, January-February 1928. He has also collected genealogies of the Troyers, the Hershbergers, and the Detweilers.

During his retirement, Troyer has also taken the time to write a short autobiography (29 pages, type-script). Another longtime member of the community and friend of

Troyer's, Oren Detweiler, wrote a biographical sketch of Troyer, *Around and Around the Hill*, published in the early 1980s.

Another of Troyer's projects has been to continue to research and write about the Amish-Mennonites and about the history of the Fairview Mennonite congregation. In the 1920s, Troyer married Freda Kauffman, who came from this Fairview group. In the early 1920s, Troyer also transferred his membership from the Conservative Mennonite Church at Au Gres, Michigan, to Fairview. Research into the history of the Fairview congregation began in earnest for

Troyer when the congregation began talking about having a history of their church written. The congregation celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1979 and published a short history and pictorial directory, but there was interest in having a more complete story written.

When I visited Fairview in April 1990, the Fairview History Book Committee had an almost-completed manuscript in hand. In a supper meeting arranged by Troyer, I had the privilege of meeting the committee: Beverly Friend, MaryLou Green, Genevieve Troyer, Norma Troyer, Virgil Hershberger (the pastor of the Fairview congregation), and Ora Troyer. It was with interest that I heard of the ups and downs of publishing a book: from research to writing, to putting the manuscript on computer, to editing the book, to writing an introduction, to finding photographs, to having more meetings, and then finally to finding a printer.

During the 1980s, while working on the history of the church, Troyer uncovered and collected many historical documents on the church. Among them were the church record book, 1904-1917; secretary's reports, 1919-1921; assorted correspondence and reports, 1912-1961;



Michigan Mennonite Bible School records held at Fairview, 1946-1966; documents from the 50th anniversary celebrations in 1954; church bulletins, 1954-1989; records of the new church building dedication of 1960-1961; church constitutions; and the 75th anniversary booklet of the church, 1979.

Another valuable historical work forwarded to the Archives is the *Autobiography of Menno Esch*, 1879-1967 (52 pages). Esch served as minister and then bishop at Fairview from 1906 to 1952. Troyer also discovered a short unpublished biography of Eli A. Bontrager, who served the church as minister from 1904 to 1916. Other short unpublished papers on the history of the church include Lillie Esch (1929), Clyde O. Troyer (1959), Regina Kauffman (1965) and Sherm Kauffman (1972).

During the mid-1980s, Clarence Troyer published *The Mennonite Church in the Upper Peninsula* (Evangel Press, Nappanee, Indiana). Although Fairview is located in the lower peninsula, it too had sent workers up to the peninsula churches at Manclona and Wellington and had initiated its own mission outreaches, like Sunnyside, located just north of Comins.

In the late 1980s, Troyer along with a company of volunteers, visited the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College. They came to page through the many issues of the *Herald of Truth* and the *Gospel Herald* in search of published reports and articles about the Fairview community. These articles were photocopied and became source material for writing the congregational history. It was partially this visit to Goshen that led Troyer to consider placing his collection of historical materials in the Archives of the Mennonite Church.

Researching the congregation's history raised new reflections on a sad time in their history; in 1918 pro-war neighbors burned the church building. The History Committee wondered how best to

write about this World War I incident. Troyer had gathered some information on this event. Other material was preserved in court records housed at the State Archives of Michigan in Lansing, after an investigation of the burning. Troyer had provided important information about this hostile act to Gerlof D. Homan, professor of history at Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois. Homan has written several articles on the Mennonite experience in World War I and published an article on the Fairview situation in the April 1990 issue of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. Homan has since published his book, *American Mennonites and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Herald Press, 1994).

Finally, by the spring of 1990, the History Book Committee had a manuscript on the Fairview Mennonite Church in hand. In September I heard that the first published copy of the book, *Fairview Mennonite Church: A Congregational History*, was auctioned off at the Northern Michigan Relief Sale, August 4, 1990. Troyer signed and donated copies of the history to the Mennonite Historical Library and to the Archives of the Mennonite Church.

The book is 266 pages in length. In the portion of the volume that Troyer wrote, he took the history from its beginnings to 1960. He included much of the Anabaptist, Amish, Amish-Mennonite, and family and community history in which he was so well versed. He dedicated the book to his wife, Freda, and to his children who gave to him the "commodities most needed by a writer: sympathy, respect, laughter, and love."

Virgil Hershberger, the pastor of the Fairview congregation, then picked up the story from the sixties, and concluded with a chapter on "The Nineties and Beyond." Hershberger provided several key challenges for the church: honoring the message of Scripture, continuing sacrifice in the face of affluence,

keeping unity in the midst of diversity, practicing evangelism, opening up long-standing friendship and family groupings, preparing and sending youth into service, dealing more effectively with conflict, maintaining a peace-church stance, promoting active prayer and faith, and renewing worship of God. In 1967 Hershberger had succeeded Harvey Handrich in 1967, who had served as minister and then bishop of the Fairview congregation from 1946 to 1967. An introduction to the book by Genevieve Troyer, and submissions by Ira Esch (Men's Service Organization), Velma Esch (Northern Michigan Relief Sale Report), and David Johnson (Camp Barakel) complete the book.

The book is a culmination of many years of work, especially on the part of Ora Troyer. His historical interests also led to the collection and preservation of many historical documents, which are now available for the public to use. *D*

—Dennis Stoesz is archivist at the Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.

## Mission Statement

God calls us  
to preserve our heritage,  
to interpret our story, and  
to proclaim God's work  
among us.



# A Call to Faithfulness: Dutch Mennonites Facing the Storm in 1940

by Gerlof D. Homan

On May 10, 1940, Nazi legions invaded the Netherlands, a nation that remained unscathed during the First World War. The Netherlands hoped it could also escape the ravages of the new conflict that descended upon Europe in September 1939 when Hitler attacked Poland. The Dutch resisted the German invasion, but the struggle against overwhelming odds was short-lived. On May 15 the Dutch military capitulated. At that time few Dutch citizens realized what horrors lay in store for them in the next five years of Nazi terror.

Dutch Mennonites would share in the general agony and pain as they and other citizens were subjected to many humiliating and cruel measures. Many of them would lose their lives, suffer mentally and economically, and in a few instances see the destruction of their houses of worship. How well were they prepared to face the storm?

In 1940 Dutch Mennonites numbered about 30,000 members and 130 congregations, some of which were very small and others quite large. They were not like their famous 16th- and 17th-century ancestors; they embraced rather liberal theological beliefs, even discarding the idea of conscientious objection to war.<sup>1</sup> In the years before the outbreak of war in 1940, some successful efforts had been made to breathe new life into Dutch Mennonitism. However, many congregations were not very much affected by it. Congregations were autonomous and received little leadership from their national orga-

nization, the Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit (ADS).

The Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit, or General Mennonite Conference, was established in 1811 in an effort to unify various factions and groups. But it had never emerged, or was not allowed to emerge, as a strong national organization. That would change during the war when special times called for different leadership. An example of this new kind of leadership was the ADS call in September 1940 to all Doopsgezinde congregations to face the current storm. It was drafted by F. Dijkema, one of the pastors of the large Mennonite congregation in Amsterdam and a member of the executive committee of ADS, and slightly edited by its chairman, F. H. Pasma.<sup>2</sup> Below is a translation of this call:

## Central Mennonite Conference<sup>3</sup>

Amsterdam, September 1940

To all church boards of Mennonite Congregations

## Brothers and Sisters!

The Executive Committee of ADS feels itself called to direct itself to you in connection with the difficult time in which we are currently living.

We hope that you feel with us that we must, with God's help, do everything that is in our power to bring the ship of the Brotherhood through the turbulent waters to a safe haven. Our fathers did that too in times that were equal in difficulties and dangers, yes, which in that regard, in many ways, even surpassed them. Thinking back to those stirring times of our Brotherhood, here and elsewhere,

we can look up to that cloud of witnesses who "kept what they had," and we must do that with thankfulness towards those faithful, and with the humble prayer that the Almighty God will strengthen us as He did them. Prof. Knappert<sup>4</sup> has in his evaluation of our oldest martyrs' book, *Het Offer des Heeren*,<sup>5</sup> reminded us of the word *Noblesse Oblige*. Let us take this to heart what was said by this non-Mennonite brother. For four centuries our Brotherhood has resisted the undermining and destructive powers of the world. Our task is to extend the burning torch, given to us by the ancestors.

Are we all well aware of the responsibility that rests upon us especially in this time? Certainly not. The material and spiritual condition of many of our congregations show clearly that they are not borne by the love and affection by those who belong to them. And yet, we must deeply and earnestly realize that what our Brotherhood possesses as a call requires and is worthy of everyone's support, because it<sup>6</sup> is a Christian Brotherhood. The treasures given by God in Christ to the world are also entrusted to it. As its share, it has fulfilled, with human imperfection, but also with and for us often embarrassing power and sacrifice, the task given to the Christian church, to wit, the glorification and worship of God, the heralding of God's redeeming love as revealed in Christ, the preaching of the Good News commanded by Christ, and in so doing given to individuals and the world an eternal blessing. It has done this according to the light given to it by the revelation of God, and thereby stressed the unbreakable connection



between faith and life, so that faith has to reveal itself in life, personal faith, and the biblical foundation on which one can only build with hope. And thus it has gained and kept so far its own place amidst Christian churches and communities, to which it must feel itself otherwise bound through the same origin and the same goal.

He who knows history will feel compelled to thank God for His preservation of our Brotherhood through all times, but also will think back with respect to those who looked forward to the completion of the Kingdom of God, prayed in His power, fought and worked to prepare the way of the Lord.

Our time calls all of us with a loud warning voice to place ourselves in their ranks. No one knows how the world will emerge from the present chaos. But it will certainly be a world that needs for its preservation the Gospel, as a strength from God, and men and women who stand in that power and present a living witness of what God gives them in Christ. It will also be a world which cannot do without the foci whence streams which glow with the light which is the life with God, the true eternal life. Such foci are also our congregations. How small they often are at the place where they are established; they are God's ambassadors to the world.

If the world does not want to impoverish itself hopelessly, they must be preserved, and if we—and the offspring that come after us and asks us what we have done with what was entrusted to us—want to keep our faith strong and alive. Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, love the Brotherhood and love our congregations to which you have once tied yourselves with your promises upon which you received baptism. Seek her and support her so that the Brotherhood will remain strong and strengthen you in your Christian faith.

The Master is here and He calls you! God is faithful, be faithful to God!


With God's Speed and brotherly greetings—Executive Committee of ADS

P.S. Inform the members of the congregations of the contents of this piece.<sup>7</sup>

The language of this statement is not very stirring and many sentences are a bit long if not convoluted, posing an interesting challenge to the translator. But it tells us much about the history and state of Dutch Mennonitism in 1940. Especially important is the lament over the congregations' spiritual malaise and the reminder of the shining and inspiring faith of famous Mennonite ancestors. One is also struck by the call's theology; it does not reflect the kind of liberalism or modernism one would expect. On the contrary; it contains very little with which American Mennonites, who had often decried their Dutch brothers' and sisters' embrace of modernism, could disagree.

In general, ADS's call is very cautious and does not openly denounce National Socialism, the new ideology whose principal tenets were totally incompatible with Christian values. Nor does it refuse cooperation with the new authorities. Especially in the post-war era this caution or neutral attitude would provoke much criticism. It was felt that ADS should have displayed more courage to speak boldly against various occupation policies.<sup>8</sup> Yet, about one month later, in October 1940, ADS did join other churches in denouncing the beginning of Nazi persecution of the Jews. It would do so again on several other occasions during the war when it protested against various occupation policies.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps ADS hoped that Mennonites might remain faithful by reminding them of the splendid testimony of their famous ancestors, and by admonishing congregations to remain "ambassadors of God." Let us hope ADS assumed

Mennonites clearly understood they could only do so by rejecting the Nazi call to paganism. Most Dutch Mennonites would reject Nazi ideology. Unfortunately, some, including a few ministers, embraced it. 

—Gerlof D. Homan, born in the Netherlands, teaches history at Illinois State University.

## END NOTES

1. On a Dutch view of Dutch Mennonitism before World War II, see the author's "Early Twentieth-Century Dutch-American Mennonite Contacts," *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* 53 (April 1992): 6-10.

2. F. H. Pasma, "ADS - voorzitter in oorlogstijd," *Stemmen uit de Doopsgezinde Boederschap* 12 (1963): 13. Interesting also is an editorial by W. Koekebakker, editor of *De Zondagsbode*, the official ADS organ, on September 29, 1940. In it he lamented the "iron times" Mennonites and others were now experiencing. But he also felt this was a blessed time for those who wanted to "think and act." The glow that bent the iron of our times and melted it in the mold provided by God, he wrote, purified our souls in a crucible. Strong people were needed to bend the iron on the paths God walks, he believed, but stronger men were needed to walk on God's paths and to be "messengers of His love, not in word but in the fire and glow of the Holy Spirit" (p. 1).

3. A copy of this document is in the ADS Archives that have been deposited in the Gemeente Archief [County Archive] of Amsterdam. Its archival number is 843.79. It was also published in *De Zondagsbode*, September 22, 1940, p. 1.

4. Laurentius Knappert (1863-1943) was professor of church history at the University of Leiden who appreciated Mennonites and wrote a few articles about their history. He was especially impressed with early Dutch Mennonites who, he felt, had been persecuted more than any other religious groups. In his book, *Van der vaderen lijdensmoed [About the fathers' courage to suffer]* (Amsterdam: J. H. de Bussey, 1927) Knappert wrote: "And although the writer of these lines does not belong to the Mennonites, he can nevertheless imagine that those who do, read with pride about their fathers' courage to suffer and will repeat for themselves the old saying, *Noblesse oblige*" (16). It is interesting that Knappert, unlike Dijkma in his call, did not use the French *noblesse oblige* but the Dutch, *adeldom verplicht*.

5. *Het Offer des Heeren [The Sacrifice to the Lord]* was the first of Dutch Mennonite martyr books. The first edition appeared in 1562 and was followed by 10 more in the next 40 years. It contains several accounts of the suffering of Dutch Mennonite martyrs and provides us with much information on the persecution of 16th-century Anabaptists in the Netherlands. *Het Offer des Heeren* became the



foundation of Tieleman Jansz van Braght's famous *Het Bloedig Toneel der Doops-gesinde en Weereeloose Christenen* . . . [*The bloody theater of Mennonites and defenseless Christians* . . .] more commonly known in Dutch as the *Martelaerspiegel* or *Martyrs Mirror*, the first edition of which appeared in 1660. For a critical study of *Het offer des Heeren*, see S. Kramer, *Het Offer des Heeren: De oudste verzameling Doopsgezinde martelaarsbrieven en offerliederen* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1904).

6. At this time Dutch spelling and grammar had been modernized and simplified and only in very obvious cases still used gender designa-

tions. However, ADS continued to refer to the Mennonite Brotherhood as a female entity. In this translation I have not used the pronoun "she." Yet to me a female brotherhood in this time of gender consciousness may seem to be an interesting, albeit accidental, linguistic solution and compromise.

7. For further reading on the Dutch Mennonite experience in World War II, see the author's articles "We Must . . . and Can Stand Firmly: Dutch Mennonites in World War II," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 69 (1) (Jan. 1995): 7-36; and "Nederlandse Doopsgezinden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog." *Doopsgezinde*

*Bijdragen*, New Series, 21 (1996): 165-196.

8. See Elisabeth I. T. Brussee-van der Zee, "De Doopsgezinde Broederschap en het Nationaal Socialisme in de jaren 1933-1945" (Doctoraalscriptie, University of Amsterdam, 1985).

9. L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1972), 2: 719; H. C. Touw, *Het verzet der Hervormde Kerk* (The Hague: Boekencentrum, 1946), 1 and 2: passim.

# Log Cabin Captures a Moment in History

by Roxana Currie

When I first met this rustic relic of the past, I was a wide-eyed romantic about Iowa's log cabin period from 1845 through the Civil War. But early discussions with the experts had convinced me the cabin couldn't be that old, so my heart danced only moderately at my first glimpse.

Oh, but it looked old. It had been shingled with asphalt and listed terribly to one side despite the best effort of a steel cable to hold it square. Even columbine and bluebells brightening the tall grass around it couldn't create a homey feeling. But it was a real log building—rough, squared logs, chinked with some gray, crumbling mortar.



*Polk County meetinghouse: "The years have not been kind to it, but it continues to stand, a memorial to the Mennonites who worshiped in it nearly 150 years ago."*  
Credit: T. J. Gjeller

I obeyed the owner's order not to enter the cabin, ducked my head through the door, and craned my neck to take it all in. The dim interior, crowded with the typical accumulation of rural Iowa's "empty" outbuildings, looked more like an old shed. There was a loft over the north end, intact but without access. The odd windows sitting on the ground on the south wall took on the shape of a fireplace long gone. Yes, it was a house, lived in by sturdy pioneers who traveled here by covered wagon, stumped out a farmstead, and built a community.

The earthy smell of well-ventilated age swept me into the past. I had to answer the mystery of this

cabin. What was its particular story? Who built it? And how old was it really?

The current owner was a single woman from Des Moines who had remodeled a pre-Civil War frame house on the acreage into a summer cottage. She had only a tidbit of information about the cabin, but she had faithfully propped and prodded it into staying upright for 60 years. When she bought the place, the seller had told her the cabin was a historic site. The site of what, no one seemed to know.

The only presenting clues were land records. The acreage had come to her from James Brendel, who farmed it for 20 years. He'd pur-



chased it from N. R. Kuntz, a Polk City businessman who speculated in land. Kuntz owned the farm for 50 years, renting it to various tenants. He had bought it from Peter Gfeller, and in 1856 Gfeller had bought it from the original owner, John B. Neuenschwander.

Land records suggested that Kuntz wouldn't have built the cabin, since he only rented out the land, so it surely was built before 1863. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources was interested in looking at it now, and after a look confirmed it was probably a pre-Civil War cabin.

Gfeller was the only name on the land records that any local person still carried. A call to Norman Gfeller, a retired farmer active in our local Kiwanis, added an enthusiastic investigator to the Mystery of the Log Cabin, one who became even more enthusiastic after deducing that his grandfather had been born in it.

Yet even the birth of a grandfather is hardly a historic event. The mystery appeared to be sealed in the past until a *Des Moines Register* article appeared. The reporter, unable to answer a reader's question about a Mennonite cemetery in the north part of Des Moines, quoted a Historical Society publication, *The Mennonites in Iowa*, and listed the names of the only Mennonites known to settle in Polk County: Leichty, Gehman (Lehman?), Snyder, Gfeller, Nussbaum, and Neuenschwander! (I was phoning the library even as I finished reading the article.) The meeting place of Polk County's only Mennonite community certainly would be a historic site.

In *Mennonites in Iowa*, Melvin Gingerich wrote that John and Peter Neuenschwander and Isaac Nussbaum had been part of a Mennonite community in Putnam County, Ohio, for 20 years after leaving Switzerland. They came to Polk County, Iowa, buying land in 1849, land first being offered for sale in 1848. Peter was 73 years of age. He bought 86 acres of land; his son, John, 280. Nussbaums also bought

land in Madison Township in 1849. Leichtys came in 1850.

The Mennonite custom was for visiting preachers to come and lead worship in these small, leaderless congregations as often as possible. When the congregation grew and desired it, leadership was chosen from within the group. In the Polk County group, Joseph Schroeder was not ordained to the office of preacher, nor John Neuenschwander to the office of deacon, until August of 1858. That's when the church was officially formed. The cabin had been sold to Gfeller two years earlier, but the fact that John was chosen deacon probably recognizes his leadership of the group over the previous 10 years. It seems nearly certain they met in his home, our historic site, from 1849 through 1856.

John had 14 children, and tradition urged him to provide land for them. By 1864 he had accumulated enough land to give his sons Peter and Daniel each 120 acres; his daughter Anna, who had married Preacher Schroeder, 46 1/2 acres; and daughters Elizabeth and Catherine each 15 acres.

Elizabeth and Catherine were married to John and Jacob Beutler respectively. The Beutlers were the first Mennonite settlers in Mahaska County, Iowa; it was common for the sparsely populated congregations to go to another community to find husbands and wives for their daughters and sons.

The Gfellers were from Switzerland and came to Iowa in 1856. Family history records a strong Reformed background, but Gingerich's book lists them as part of the Mennonite Church of Polk County. Peter and Anna's daughter Rosa married John Neuenschwander's son Peter. Only the three youngest Gfellers were born in the cabin: Wilhelm (Norman's grandfather), Peter Herman, and Christina.

In writings P. H. Gfeller described "their home in Iowa, which was a log cabin. . . . The cabin was located near the timber along the Des Moines River and a small creek, which provided a place to

swim and fish. The timber yielded wood, nuts, wild cherries, and apples."

By 1874, the Gfellers also needed more land, and Peter set out for Dickinson County, Kansas, arriving there with the grasshopper invasion. The next spring the entire Gfeller family joined him there. The cabin may have been empty since then, unless one of Kuntz' renters lived in it.

In 1933, Gingerich interviewed 74-year-old Jacob Liechty Jr., who may have been the last to remember the Mennonite community he was part of as a child. He related that the services were always in homes and always in German. He attended with his aunt and uncle, Daniel Beery and Elizabeth Nussbaum Beery, in his overalls like the rest of the men. No one had Sunday clothes, but he didn't remember that anyone dressed differently from the rest of the community.

A partial list of Swiss immigrants in northern Polk County before the Civil War, by genealogist Dave Ringgenberg, notes John, Jacob, and Ulrich Liechty; John Werstberg; Abraham Amstutz; Conrad and Hohann Moekley; Frederick Manz; and Peter Gfeller. Gingerich adds Beutlers, Jacob Gehmen, and Preacher Singer, noting that in 1865, Polk City had six subscribers to the church paper. According to the author, that was a large number for such a small congregation and was a measure of their commitment. In the 10 years after the Civil War, at least 25 new Swiss families immigrated to northern Polk County, and in 1879 they organized, not a Mennonite Church, but the Salem Reformed Church.

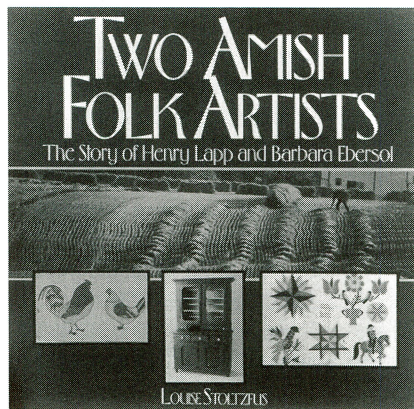
In 1868 Neuenschwandlers moved to Moniteau County, Missouri. They were part of Polk County's history for only 20 years, yet remarkably they left us a log cabin. With its history explained, somehow the cabin doesn't look so decrepit. It still lists terribly to the west. It's still very well ventilated. The years have not been kind to it, but it continues to stand, a memorial to the Mennonites who worshipped in it nearly 150 years ago. *D*



## Book Reviews

*Amish Folk Artist Barbara Ebersol: Her Life, Fraktur, and Death Record Book* by David Luthy, Lancaster PA: Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society. 1995. 127 pp. \$29.95 + p/h.

*Two Amish Folk Artists: The Story of Henry Lapp and Barbara Ebersol* by Louise Stoltzfus, Intercourse, PA: Good Books. 1995. 119 pp. \$19.95. Reviewed by Gerald Studer



These two books constitute a significant exposure of Amish folk artistry to the general public along with fascinating biographical data regarding the two artists. Both books are abundantly illustrated with full-color pictures of their work along with insightful detail concerning their lives and the development and range of their skills.

Henry Lapp was a locally well-known Amish furniture maker and watercolor artist. He was the owner of a hardware store, an occasional inventor, and a faithful member of the Amish church who lived in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, from 1862 to 1904. Barbara Ebersole lived on the farm adjoining Henry Lapp's property. She is remembered for her talents with both watercolor and thread. She is remembered for traveling from farm to farm, sewing Sunday suits and "marking books." This latter term is still used among the Amish. It refers to the decorat-



One of many bookplates created by artist Barbara Ebersol. This one was made for David King, March 31, 1871.

ing and inscribing of German Bibles, hymnbooks, and other treasured family keepsakes with a form of calligraphy and painted decoration called fraktur.

Author Stoltzfus lists a curious series of similarities that apply to both artists besides their living on adjoining farms: both were handicapped, Henry with a hearing handicap and Barbara with dwarfism; both were visual artists; and both remained single throughout their lives. It is likely that both were granted somewhat more leniency in their Amish culture because of their handicaps.

Only Stoltzfus describes and extensively illustrates artisan and folk-artist Henry Lapp. He was known for his kindhearted spirit and his playfulness. He communicated with people through his notebooks, several of which have survived. One in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art is a full-color catalog with watercolor drawings of the items he built.

Another in the collection of the Heritage Center of Lancaster County is filled with intricate diagrams of many items in his catalog. A third is a personal journal with many pencil sketches and comments relating to his everyday experiences.

Because of his hearing handicap, Lapp found conversation difficult. He often spent his time at church and family gatherings entertaining the children by drawing and painting small sketches that he would then freely give away.

While he thoroughly embodied Amish beliefs and values, he also had an inventive nature and a risk-taking spirit. His drawing ability enabled him to communicate, and the furniture he built ensured a steady source of income. His paintings reflect a curiosity that ranged far beyond his rural farm life. He drew lions, giraffes, elephants and a collection of cartoon-like characters, and he made a gaily painted wooden village.

Henry invented a shutter-bolt for window shutters which he patented in 1898. Henry's activities, whether his making of furniture or his 10-day vacation to Niagara Falls, were reported by the Lancaster correspondent to *The Sugarcreek Budget*, the weekly Amish newspaper published in Ohio. His furniture definitely reflects his Pennsylvania German tradition while his artistry illustrates his creativity. One of the small keepsake boxes he made is unusual because of the painting of Niagara Falls on the lid.

Henry's shop tools were powered by a large windmill. A rope-powered elevator carried lumber and supplies between the two floors of his shop. In spite of his hearing handicap and his shortness of stature (5 1/2 feet), Henry Lapp lived a very useful and, indeed in many ways, a progressive life even though he was thoroughly committed to the Amish lifestyle. We are indebted to this author for introducing us to this artisan as well as to Barbara Ebersol.



The Stoltzfus book treats both the life and the work of Henry Lapp and Barbara Ebersol while the book by Luthy describes and illustrates only that of Ebersol. Ebersol inherited the genes of dwarfism, unlike her three brothers and six sisters. She may be said to have compensated for her lack in stature by her creative fraktur ability. She was known by the nickname Bevli and measured only 3 1/2 feet in height. She also smoked cigars and in later life walked with crutches. Because of her tiny stature, children sometimes wanted to play with her, though one person recalls that his mother told him he could not play with Barbara because she was in her sixties at the time. She carried a little stool wherever she went to put under her feet because standard height chairs or benches were so high her feet did not reach the floor.

Both of these books document a tradition of artistic expression and a well-developed folk-art heritage among the Old Order Amish. In the case of Barbara Ebersol, these books tell the story of an unusual Amish woman whose enthusiasm for art lasted a lifetime. Because of the severely restrained recognition of artistic ability among the Amish, a beautiful eulogy published in an April issue (1922) of *The Budget* does not even mention her gift and lifelong practice of decorated fraktur book "markings." It is still more curious and significant that Luthy, her Amish admirer, should belatedly recognize with such fullness the skill that in her lifetime was practiced but relatively unpraised. In fact it is rare indeed that a fellow-Amish person should author a book on Ebersol's life and work.

In 1988 Daniel McCauley coauthored with his wife, Kathryn, a book titled *Decorative Arts of the Amish of Lancaster County* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 160 pp.). In his foreword, he hails Ebersol as "one of the most innovative and important practitioners of decorative art among these people." While noting her small physical

stature, he exclaims, "What could more adequately represent the spirit of Amish philosophy than for the smallest to prove to be one of the most significant?"

One hundred twenty-nine bookplates form the basis for Luthy's study; artist Ebersol initialed eight, printed her full name on 49, and made four bookplates with her full name for her own volumes. This means that 68 (a little over half) were done anonymously. She gradually discontinued autographing her bookplates as she grew older. Luthy appropriately suggests, "Because Amish society discourages individualism and stresses a group identity, Barbara, as she grew older, may have become more conscious of being Amish and of the possible pride she might be displaying in her atypical role as a fraktur artist."


A talented artist can be granted at least one foible and for Barbara it was the consistent misspelling of *Geschrieben* as *Geschriben*.

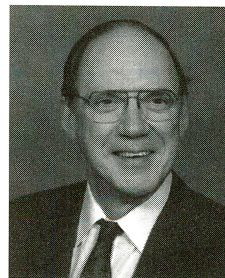
The spiderweb rose became her trademark for bookplates by 1874. Sometimes she made it stand alone while at other times she drew it double or combined it with a flower of a different style. These are abundantly illustrated in this book. Only rarely did Barbara not enclose each bookplate with a border. These borders varied in design as the years went by. She made her most complicated border on a bookplate for herself. Her borders customarily were made of leaves, flowers, and berries.

Luthy notes also additional art forms, including birth statements, a death memorial, half a dozen tokens of remembrance, and a variety of other items, using either her paintbrush or her needle. These too are illustrated in this book in full color. Other examples of her needlework are both discussed and illustrated. A chapter entitled "Letters to Cousins" is also featured in this handsome book. Eight letters, written when Barbara was 40 to 54, are extant. They are written in her neat German handwriting. The first of these letters was written a year after

the Ontario (Canada) Amish divided into two groups over whether or not to construct meetinghouses, and only 10 years after her own community had been faced with the same situation. These letters are written in High German and in the Pennsylvania German dialect without paragraphs or punctuation. The letters are provided in translation and with paragraphing and punctuation.

An additional special feature of this book is the full text of births and deaths that occurred during her lifetime, a total of 730 entries. This is not the only such list to be found among the Amish, but it is by far the most comprehensive. She began this list in her 64th year beginning with her grandparents. She traced the complete genealogy of her family, and then enlarged her record to include virtually the entire Lancaster Amish church. Every letter of every entry was painstakingly rendered in her meticulous fraktur printing. It was an enormous task to acquire and collate all this information, but it demonstrates the importance that her undertaking had to her. It is indeed an invaluable genealogical document.

Both of these books are beautiful in format and illustration and a credit to these people, deserving of the knowledge and the appreciation of the "outside" world. It marks a most unexpected milestone when an Amish member and scholar, in the case of the Luthy book, dares to bridge the chasm between the Amish and the non-Amish worlds. 



—Gerald Studer  
is a former book  
review editor of  
MBH and is  
retired from  
pastoral min-  
istry



*From Hazelbrush to Cornfields: The First One Hundred Years of the Amish-Mennonites in Johnson, Washington, and Iowa Counties of Iowa, 1846-1946*, by Katie Yoder Lind. Kalona, Iowa: Mennonite Historical Society of Iowa, 1994. 755 pp. \$40. Reviewed by Lorraine Roth

It is obvious that Katie Yoder Lind listened to and observed life around her at a very early age. Because of this sensitivity, she was able to bridge the gap between her own experience and that of the beginnings of things in the Amish-Mennonite community in the Iowa counties about which she writes.

Several of the author's many interests are covered in this volume. The people are specific people and families. Thus genealogists will find this a gold mine of information on persons who lived in or passed through these counties. History—both Mennonite and secular—receives her attention. She frequently pauses to list world and local events that took place during the period that she is describing. Her treatment of Mennonite and congregational histories is sparse, not because of lack of interest, but because of lack of space, and because she expects her readers to be familiar with the books already available. The social history of this Iowa community is the author's great delight, and she excels in her descriptions of life on the farm and in the family.

Yoder Lind has divided her study into three major parts. Book I deals with the early settlers, and this part is also divided into chronological eras. She names the pioneers who arrived in each era, gives their stories as completely as she was able to retrieve them, and gives their genealogies, including certain lines to present generations. This section may be somewhat tedious for people who are not familiar with the families of these counties.

Book II continues in the same form as in Book I, describing those who arrived between 1870 and 1920.

*Pioneer Amish-Mennonites on the trail to Iowa. Line drawing from Lind's book, From Hazelbrush to Cornfields.*

However, the new arrivals are fewer and the stories are closer to the author's and her immediate predecessors' experience; the social history begins to get more thorough treatment. This is the section in which the author's keen observations and literary skills really blossom. Her descriptions of life on the farm are delightful. One wonders whether her memory is playing tricks on her or whether she really did enjoy the farm tasks as her descriptions would indicate she did. Anyone living during the era she describes will certainly be pleased to find their experiences so aptly portrayed. Those who did not experience life on an Iowa farm will, nevertheless, be captivated by her enthusiasm and her excellent word pictures.

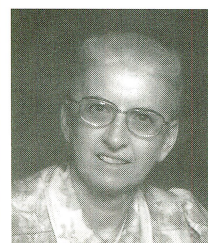
Book III again deals with a few newcomers and very briefly brings the social history into the modern era.

The book contains a number of sketches but few photographs. The genealogical listings contain much space, making them easy to read—or skip over if the reader is not interested. The wide margins are pleasing, but they also add to the bulk of the book with its 755 pages.

A two-page map showing spe-

cific farm locations from about 1872 is a welcome addition. The index, limited to the names of people, is a very complete listing of all the settlers' names and the pages on which each is found. The bibliography includes many relevant Mennonite church histories and genealogies.

Katie Yoder Lind has done the Iowa Mennonite community a great service in bringing together this anthology of people and their stories. Those of us interested in the genealogies of any of these persons and those of us who simply enjoy a good story about life in earlier times also thank her. *L*



—Lorraine Roth is a retired missionary who has done much genealogical work in recent years, focusing on the Amish who immigrated to

Ontario from Europe in the 1820s. She has written or edited over a dozen family histories and lives in Waterloo, Ontario.



## News and Notes

***The Riddle of Things Past Conference, Martin Chapel, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, May 9-10, 1997.*** This conference is an educational event for congregational and conference historians, pastors, teachers, and lay historians. John L. Ruth, Richard MacMaster, and Al Keim are featured speakers. In addition, there will be a host of seminar leaders. Seminars are planned to train congregational historians, provide teaching resources for pastors and Sunday school teachers, and offer tools to genealogists. The *Mennonite Experience in America* series will be featured as teaching and preaching resources.

Sponsors of this event are the Virginia Mennonite Conference Historical Committee, Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians, Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church, and Eastern Mennonite University.

For more information, contact John Sharp (219 535-7477), Nate Yoder (540 432-4255), or James O. Lehman (540 432-4169).

***Menno Simons 501 Conference, May 16-18, 1997, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center.*** *Menno Simons 501* refers, not to a 500-level college course, but to Menno's age! Having commemorated his 500th birthday last year, it is now appropriate to reflect on our kinship with Menno.

For centuries Mennonites have carried Menno's name. Why? Is it still appropriate? Does Menno Simons still have any relevance for the nearly one million Mennonites living today on six continents? What were his primary convictions? Are there good reasons to continue

using this 16th-century Dutch reformer's name?

Sponsored by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church and Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, this conference will be the setting to consider these issues.

John L. Ruth will be the primary speaker and storyteller, using slides taken in Europe to present the life and ministry of Menno Simons. Gerald Brunk, Joel Alderfer, and John Sharp are modern versions of Menno who have given first-person presentations of Menno's life and ministry. James Clemens will lead worship and present his composition *The Prince of Peace: A Song Cycle on the Words of Menno Simons*.

Mark Peachey, a student at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, will share his pilgrimage from the Catholic church back to the Mennonite church.

For more information, contact Bob Koch (800 839-1021) or John Sharp (219 535-7477).

**Iowa Mennonite History—**On Friday and Saturday, October 11 and 12, 1996, Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa, was visited by characters from Iowa Mennonite History. First settlers, portrayed by Frank Yoder and Kathryn Yoder, shared their struggle with disease and hard work. Church leaders, Lynn and Barb Troyer, shared church struggles which included use of pretty dishes. The Civil War's impact was presented by Wilbur Yoder portraying Henry Hochstetler, who lost two sons in the war. Church development was shared by Henry D. Miller as a visiting preacher from Ohio. Roll-down buggy tops and raincoats were concerns. Samuel D. Guengerich, played by Martin Yoder, read from his diary. His

purchase of a printing press was important. Education developments were shared by Jane Yoder-Short and daughter Amanda. The growth of businesses was told by Larry Swartzendruber. Noah Helmuth traced the peace position from World War I to the present time. [From *The Challenge*, vol. 49, no. 9, November 1996, p. 4.]

**Global Mennonite History Project—**In a bold new initiative to record Anabaptist history through non-Western eyes, the Mennonite World Conference Executive Committee approved the Global Mennonite History Project (GMHP) during its July 1996 meeting in Elspeet, Netherlands.

Current census reports confirm that more Mennonites and Brethren in Christ now live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America than in Europe and North America. "This great new fact takes place in the context of a globalizing culture that increasingly affects all peoples on planet Earth," suggests the project prospectus.

The lens of local history is one important route for understanding the church on a global scale. The new project aims to generate local historical insight about how the local church adds to the history of the world church. Through a network of regional teams, an interactive global conversation will anticipate mutual learning, the prospectus explains.

The GMHP was launched at the 1997 MWC Assembly 13 in Calcutta, India, with completion expected by Assembly 14 some six years later. In approving GMHP, the MWC executive committee also appointed historian John A. Lapp (US) as project coordinator. [From Willard E. Roth, *Courier*, vol. 11, no. 3, Third Quarter 1996, pp. 9-10.]



**Europe celebrates Menno Simons**—During 1996 Mennonites in Europe have marked the 500th anniversary of Menno Simons' birth in varying ways including a continent-wide assembly (MERK), an international symposium, and an essay contest.

From May 16 to 19, 1996, the sixth European Mennonite assembly (MERK) gathered at Mennorode in Elspeet, Netherlands, with the theme *500 Years After Menno Simons . . . on the Way to God's Future*. About 800 Mennonites from Germany, France, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Spain, Belgium, and Netherlands participated.

Main presentations were given by Neal Blough (France), Bernhard Ott (Switzerland), and Hildegard Wiedeman (Germany). Participants met in discussion groups to meet each other and exchange opinions on different subjects. Groups about confession of faith, euthanasia, mission, world religions, and homosexuality attracted much attention. Because of the many different languages spoken at the assembly, translation in the groups took a lot of time.

The assembly was not directed mainly to the past of Menno Simons and his time. The main focus was on the future: what to do with the legacy of Menno Simons in the days to come, in a situation of growing secularization in Europe. Bernhard Ott emphasized the importance of a spirituality of service.

Dora Geiser (Switzerland), in her sermon on Sunday morning, reminded her sisters and brothers that God's future starts where God's justice is taken seriously, where we have the courage to do as God does and put ourselves on the side of those who suffer.

Participants told about signs of hope, such as in Switzerland where the right of conscientious objection

to military service was recognized by the government in November 1995. German Mennonites have been active in relief work and reconciliation/mediation service in Bosnia. The chairman of the European Peace Committee emphasized again the importance of the idea of Ricardo Esquivia (Colombia) to start with a worldwide network of prayer and practical solidarity.

The assembly ended with an impressive communion service where bread and wine were shared as tokens of a worldwide community. At the same service, Ioan Iftincai, a teacher at a gymnasium in Romania, was baptized. Until 1990 he, along with all his colleagues, was involved in atheistic propaganda at the gymnasium. He learned to know about Mennonites via an Adventist publication. He was impressed by their history and their emphasis on the Sermon on the Mount. After serious Bible study, the desire grew in him to be baptized. He contacted French-speaking Mennonites in Switzerland; that led to an invitation to come to the MERK assembly. His desire now is to start a Mennonite congregation in Romania. [From Roelf Kuitse, *Courier*, vol. 11, no. 3, Third Quarter 1996, pp. 12-13.]

**John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest 1996**—We are happy to announce that the first place winners of the John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest 1996 were Shuji Moriichi of Elkhart, Indiana, in Class I, and Heather Esau of Minneapolis, Minnesota, in Class II. All winners in both classes are listed below:

Class I, Graduate School and Seminary—First Place: Shuji Moriichi, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary; *The Beginning of the Mennonite Church Mission in Japan 1949-1959*. Second Place:

Paulus Widjaja, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary; *The Sixteenth-Century Anabaptist View of the State*. Third Place: Natasha Sawatsky, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary; *The Berlin Problem: MCC Involvement in Post-World War II Germany*.

Class II, Undergraduate College and University—First Place: Heather Esau, Bethel College, Newton Kansas; *Peter Jansen: The Richest Mennonite Politician in Nebraska*. Second Place: Eric Jantzen, Bethel College, Newton Kansas; *A Call to Questioning: The German Mennonite Youth and Their Response to Questions of the Day as Found in the Rundbrief Gemeinschaft, 1930-38*. Third Place: Maria Hershberger, Goshen College; *The Life and Work of Leander L. Hershberger*.

Nine students in two academic levels submitted papers on various topics in Mennonite studies. In each class first place winners are awarded \$100; second place, \$50; and third place \$25. Winners also receive a one-year subscription to the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. All entrants receive a one-year subscription to the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*.

This year's entries were judged by Susan Fisher Miller, Richard A. Kauffman, and Leonard Gross.

The annual contest is sponsored by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church, and is named in honor of John Horsch (1867-1941), the German American Mennonite historian and polemicist who did much to reawaken interest in Anabaptist and Mennonite studies in the 20th century. The deadline for submission of entries for next year's contest is June 15, 1997.



## Recent Publications

Burkhardt, Mary, *Descendants of Adam Z. Martin & Emma M. Weaver*. Lancaster, PA: Published by author, 1990. 47 pp. Order from author: 1417 Mission Rd, Lancaster, PA 17601.

Chase, Mary Kinsinger, *Bertsche Family*. Portland, IN: Published by author, 1987. Order from author: 503 W High St, Portland, IN 47371.

Chase, Mary Kinsinger, *Christian Garber History*. Portland, IN: Published by author, 1996. Order from author: 503 W High St, Portland, IN 47371.

Chase, Mary Kinsinger, *Johannes Kinsinger Genealogy*. Portland, IN: Published by author, 1996. Order from author: 503 W High St, Portland, IN 47371.

Chase, Mary Kinsinger, *John Nafziger History*. Portland, IN: Published by author, 1996. Order from author: 503 W High St, Portland, IN 47371.

Daum, Robert, *The Descendants of David Kauffman in America*. Wilmington, DE: Published by author. 24 pp. Order from author: 1223 Heather Ln, Wilmington, DE 19803.

Eshelman, Grace R., *The Jacob L. Eschleman and Adaline Shelly Ancestors and Related Families*. Lancaster, PA: Published by author, 1995. 104 pp. Order from author: 34 Springhouse Rd, Lancaster, PA 17603-0620.

Eshelman, John B., *Descendants of John William & Barbara Ann Eshelman*. Lancaster, PA: Published by author, 1996. 38 pp. Order from author: 26 Deer Ford Dr, Lancaster, PA 17601.

Hertzler, Emanuel C., *The Other Hertzler-Hartzlers*. Goshen, IN: Published by author, 1995. 590 pp. Order from: Masthof Press, RR 1 Box 20, Morgantown, PA 19543-9701.

Kerns, Wilmer L., *Stanholtzer History and Allied Family Roots of Hampshire City, WV & Frederick City, VA*. Arlington, VA: Published by author, 1980. 1,044 pp. Order from author: 4715 N 38th Pl, Arlington, VA 22207-2914.

Kreider, Rachel W., assisted by J. Evan Kreider, *A Genealogy Prepared for the Descendants of Lloyd and Adelia (Stover) Kreider*. Goshen, IN: Published by author, 1995. 174 pp. Order from author: 1320 Greencroft Dr, Goshen, IN 46526.

Kreider, Robert S., David J. Rempel Smucker, and Roy H. Umble, *An Ebersole Story: The Ancestry and Descendants of Abraham D. Ebersole (1822-1892) & Anna Rutt (1827-1904)*. Goshen, IN: Ebersole Family Association, 1996. 114 pp. Order from: Robert Kreider, Box 365, N Newton, KS 67117.

Landis, Dorothy (Freeman), compiler, *Peter L. Landis History from 1841 to the Present*. Published by author, 1974. 15 pp. Order from: Jeanette Froeschner, 14300 Mines Rd, Livermore, CA 94550.

Miller, Rebecca I., Ruth E., Kathleen J., and Mary E., (The Miller Girls), *A Treasured Heritage: The Ezra J. and Susie (Weaver) Miller Family*. Middlebury, IN: The Miller Girls, 1995. 291 pp. Order from: The Miller Girls, 55514 CR 8, Middlebury, IN 46540-9506.

Richard, Kent E., *The Halblützel/Ablitzer Connection: Ancestors and Descendants*. Talmage, PA: Published by author, 1996. 78 pp. Order from author: Box 77, Talmage, PA 17580.

Sawatzky, Reynold, *Sawatzky-Klassen Ancestry Family History*. Goshen, IN: Published by author, 1996. 178 pp. Order from author: 1526 Greencroft, Goshen, IN 46526.

Schrag, Willard A., *The Johann J. Graber Family Record 1680-1991*. Moundridge, KS: Published by author, 1996. Order from author: Willard A. Schrag, R 1 Box 8, Moundridge, KS 67107.

Schwartz, Roman D. and family, eds., *History and Records of Interment, 1865-1995, Schwartz Cemetery, Berne, Indiana*. Berne, IN: Published by author. 266 pp. Order from author: 2851 W 350 S, Berne, IN 46711.

Sherrick, Catharine, *The Sherrick Chronicle 1732-1992*. Northville, MI: Horton House, 1994. 194 pp. Order from: Horton House Publications, 635 Horton St, Northville, MI 48167-1209.

Siegrist, Joanne Hess, *Hess Family Genealogy*. Bird in Hand, PA: Published by author, 1995. Order from author: 457 Beechdale Rd, Bird in Hand, PA 17505.

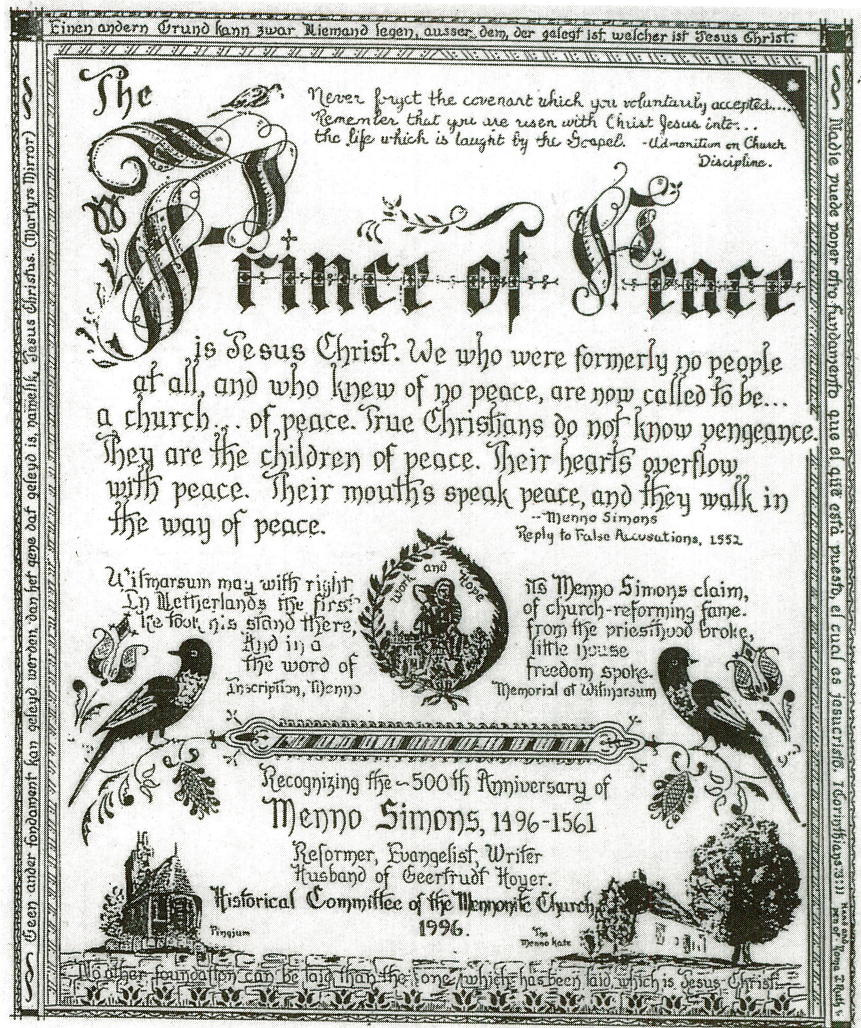
Further information on these books may be obtained from the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526.



## A Fraktur Memento Recalling the Work of Menno Simons 1496-1561

*Yes, they're still available!*

This attractive fraktur by Roma Ruth commemorates the 500th anniversary of Menno Simons' birth in 1496. Ruth, an accomplished fraktur artist, is from Harleysville, Pa. The text was chosen by John L. Ruth, Roma's husband, and a writer, a filmmaker, and a storyteller. This 18-x-24, four-color art piece was commissioned by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church. Full-color copies of the commemorative fraktur, signed and numbered, are available for \$25 from the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church.



**Yes, I want to own a copy of the Menno Simons Commemorative Fraktur by Roma Ruth.**

I have enclosed a check for the following order:

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the Commemorative Fraktur @ \$25 (\$35 Can.) each \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping and postage: \$3 (\$4 Can.) \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to make an additional contribution to the Historical Committee \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church  
1700 South Main, Goshen, IN 46526





*This portrait of Menno Simons, "Lith. of Wagner & McGuigan, 116 Chesnut St." appears opposite page 406 in History of All the Religious Denominations in the United States, second, improved, and portrait edition, published by John Winebrenner, Harrisburg, Pa., 1848. This same portrait appears on page 40 of a family-sized German Bible published with a copyright date of 1882 by Eureka Publications, Gesellschaft, Naperville, Illinois. Thanks to David Luthy. (This photo was incorrectly identified in the April issue of MHB).*

## Coming in the next issue:

- *The Relevance of Menno Simons for Evangelical Christians* by John D. Roth. Reprinted from *Christianity Today*, October 7, 1996.
- *The Significance of Menno Simons* by H. S. Bender, 1936. Reprinted from the *Complete Works of Menno Simons*, 1956.
- *New Treasures: Archives of the Mennonite Church*, by Dennis Stoesz. A sampling of personal papers and organizational records that have come into the archives during the past six months of 1996.
- Updated directory of Mennonite and Related Church Historians and Committees.
- A new project: *From Gutenberg to Gigabytes: Mennonite Archives for the 21st Century*.
- More News and Notes.

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### Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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